

# Memorandum

vancouver school board



Date: January 12, 2018  
To: Committee II - Planning and Facilities  
From: Jim Meschino, Director of Facilities  
David Green, Secretary-Treasurer  
Re: **Catchment Review – Policy & Terms of Reference**

**ITEM 4**

## REFERENCE TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

### Goal 4: Provide effective leadership, governance and stewardship

#### Objectives:

- Implement the recommendations of the Long Range Facility Plan.
- Effectively utilize school district resources and facilities.

## INTRODUCTION:

This report contains recommendations.

## BACKGROUND:

Under the School Act, the School Board has the duty after considering the recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools, to assign students to various schools in the school district and the power to divide the district into attendance areas. The attendance (catchment) areas are defined by the Board and are subject to periodic review with the goal of effectively utilizing school district resources and facilities.

Changes to current demographic trends within catchment areas or to student yields resulting from development can be managed by using a number of strategies, including catchment boundary changes.

At the December 13, 2017 Committee II meeting, staff provided a report titled “*Catchment Review Process – Initial Steps*” which identified that the location of schools to support school-aged populations in Vancouver is governed by two existing board policies and one board regulation, JC (School Attendance Areas, Boundaries) and JECC/ JECC-R (School Admission and School Choice). In order to finalize the Terms of Reference for the review process, these board policies were reviewed by staff so that the Board can choose to adhere to them, or make modifications, prior to commencing the catchment review process.

## DISCUSSION

Both guiding principles and specific criteria related to catchment boundaries are contained in policy JC (School Attendance Areas, Boundaries).

## **Guiding Principles:**

Guiding principles approved by Vancouver School Board (VSB) which serve as the foundation for the development and review of school catchment boundaries, include:

1. balance the catchment student population with the capacity of a given school;
2. regular enrolling students should attend their “home” in-catchment school. Cross boundary enrollment should be administered according to the provisions contained within the School Attendance Area Policy and Student Admission and School Choice Policy (JECC); and
3. when school catchment boundaries are revised, existing students have the option to continue attendance at their current school (“grand-parent” or legacy provision).

A policy change that could have an immediate impact on the catchment boundary change strategy regarding the continuing status of existing students at their current school, would be to remove the grand-parent or legacy provision (item 3).

### Potential Impact of Removing Legacy Clauses (Item 3 – Guiding Principles) in Policy JC and JECC/ JECC-R

In order to assess the impact of removing the legacy clauses regarding continuing students (i.e. out-of-catchment students with continuing status), a case study snap-shot was undertaken to assess the number of impacted students in a number of square block areas within different elementary school catchments. A selection of four case study areas were taken from elementary school catchment zones that could be re-aligned with a neighbouring catchment school as part of the catchment review process. The four case study areas ranged in geographic size from 10 city blocks to 20 city blocks.

The analysis found that among the total 65 blocks in four separate areas of the district there would be 186 students impacted if the legacy (or grandfather/ continuing status) clauses were immediately removed. This is an average of approximately 28 students per 10 city block area. This is a considerable impact to students and their families.

### Impact of a catchment boundary change over time with the current legacy clauses

It is difficult to fully understand what the impact of the current legacy clauses of Policy JC and JECC/ JECC-R will have on the efficacy of implementing catchment boundary changes. However, it is estimated that, without immediate policy changes, it could take upwards of 9 or 10 years for the legacy students, and their siblings, to age out of their continuing status and for the new catchment zones to fully take effect.

## **Specific Criteria for Revision of Catchment Boundaries:**

The policy JC (School Attendance Areas, Boundaries) contains a statement that consideration be given to specific criteria in the revision of catchment boundaries. These criteria include, and are not limited to, family of schools transition, walking distance, major roads, physical terrain, public transit routes and infrastructure, and proximity of schools to one another.

Staff have reviewed these criteria and while all of them are reasonable and continue to be relevant, the Board may wish to a) rank them; b) add more; c) be more specific or d) provide greater weight or emphasis to one or more of them, or a combination of the above.

For example, a proposed re-ordering, with added emphasis on the growing importance on active transportation modes, would be as follows:

1. Walking distance
2. Proximity of schools to one another
3. Public transit and active transportation infrastructure
4. Family of schools transition (elementary schools within secondary school catchment)
5. Major roads
6. Physical terrain

It is recognized that the catchment review process is one of many inter-related activities to ensure the effective utilization of school district resources and facilities. Given the time allowed to conduct the first phase of what will be the multi-year review catchment review process, the Terms of Reference appended to this report will suffice until the wider policy agenda reviews are completed.

## **CONCLUSION**

In order to proceed with the catchment review process, the Board of Trustees' direction is required to confirm:

- a) Guiding Principles in policy JC (School Attendance Areas, Boundaries)
- b) Specific criteria in policy JC (School Attendance Areas, Boundaries) that will be used in the revision of catchment boundaries
- c) Terms of Reference that accommodates the current or revised changes to these policies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Board of Trustees confirm

- 1) The guiding principles in policy JC (School Attendance Areas, Boundaries) as follows:
  - o balance the catchment student population with the capacity of a given school;
  - o regular enrolling students should attend their "home" in-catchment school. Cross boundary enrollment should be administered according to the provisions contained within the School Attendance Area Policy and Student Admission and School Choice Policy (JECC); and
  - o when school catchment boundaries are revised, existing students have the option to continue attendance at their current school ("legacy" provision).
- 2) The specific criteria in policy JC (School Attendance Areas, Boundaries) in the revision of catchment boundaries include:
  - a. Walking distance
  - b. Proximity of schools to one another
  - c. Public transit and active transportation infrastructure
  - d. Family of schools transition (elementary schools within secondary school catchment)
  - e. Major roads
  - f. Physical terrain
- 3) And approve the Terms of Reference (attached as Appendix A) for the School Catchment Review

Attachment

## Vancouver School District School Catchment Review

### DRAFT Terms of Reference

#### Introduction

As a result of input to the District's Long Range Facilities Plan, including the growth pressures and new residential land developments in the City of Vancouver, a review of impacted school catchment areas is warranted. This Terms of Reference sets out the background, scope of work, and estimated timelines.

The review is consistent with VSB Strategic Plan as:

**Goal 4:** Provide effective leadership, governance and stewardship

#### Objectives:

- Implement the recommendations of the Long Range Facilities Plan
- Effectively utilize school district resources and facilities

#### Background

The last major review and revision of catchment areas took place in 2001. This review impacted elementary and secondary catchment areas across the district. Since 2001, there have been only minor adjustments to catchment boundaries including:

- Addition of catchment areas for Elsie Roy, Norma Rose Point, and Crosstown
- Revision to several eastside catchments in 2014 as part of Our Future implementation

The current enrolment projections indicate that VSB enrollment will be essentially flat, with approximately 1% growth over the next 15 years. The utilization rate among Vancouver schools varies widely with central corridor and west schools generally being utilized fully or exceeding full capacity; while some schools particularly in the east are below full utilization. It is expected that there will be increasing pressure on schools along the Cambie corridor, Mt. Pleasant and downtown core as new medium and high-density housing is constructed. The City of Vancouver is increasing efforts to make higher density housing more family friendly and it is expected that some young families will be looking favourably at medium or high density living for lifestyle and affordability reasons.

Strategies to manage changing enrolment patterns include the active process of managing the number of students accepted through the cross-boundary application process to ensure that space is available for students who reside in catchment. Adjusting school catchment boundaries to redistribute student enrolment is another strategy tool available to the district.

Guiding principles, subject to re-affirmation by VSB, serve as the foundation for the development and review of school catchment boundaries and include:

- balance the catchment student population with the capacity of a given school;
- regular enrolling students should attend their “home” in-catchment school. Cross boundary enrollment should be administered according to the provisions contained within the School Attendance Area Policy and Student Admission and School Choice Policy (JECC); and
- when school catchment boundaries are revised, existing students have the option to continue attendance at their current school (“legacy” provision).

As outlined in Policy JC: School Attendance Areas (Boundaries), subject to confirmation by VSB, consideration will be given in the revision of catchment boundaries to:

- walking distance
- proximity of schools to one another
- public transit routes and active transportation infrastructure
- current and future (5 year) residential developments
- family of school’s transition (elementary schools within a secondary school catchment)
- major roads
- physical terrain

### **Scope of Review**

Deliverables within scope of work are limited to a review of schools in significant growth areas in the downtown core, UBC, Cambie corridor; and spillover areas impacted. It is also limited to those changes that can be made while new school capacity is delivered. The work in 2018 is part of the first phase of a multi-year catchment review program.

Specific steps within scope of the first phase are:

- Committee II and Board accepts Terms of Reference and initiates a review based on an approved planning process/ timeline
- Working Group is formalized, facilitator appointed, relevant documents provided including Terms of Reference and School Information Profiles
- Working Group establishes regular meetings with end date so that options are developed and the preferred option is prepared and documented for Steering Committee review and approval
- Up to three (3) meetings are held at Committee II, to 1) present process and objectives for the School Catchment Review, 2) present draft scenarios (receive feedback); and 3) present a preferred catchment revision scenario (receive further feedback)
- A final report and recommendations submitted
- School Board Public Meeting: Presentation of SCRC report and recommendations and implementation plan submitted

## Governance

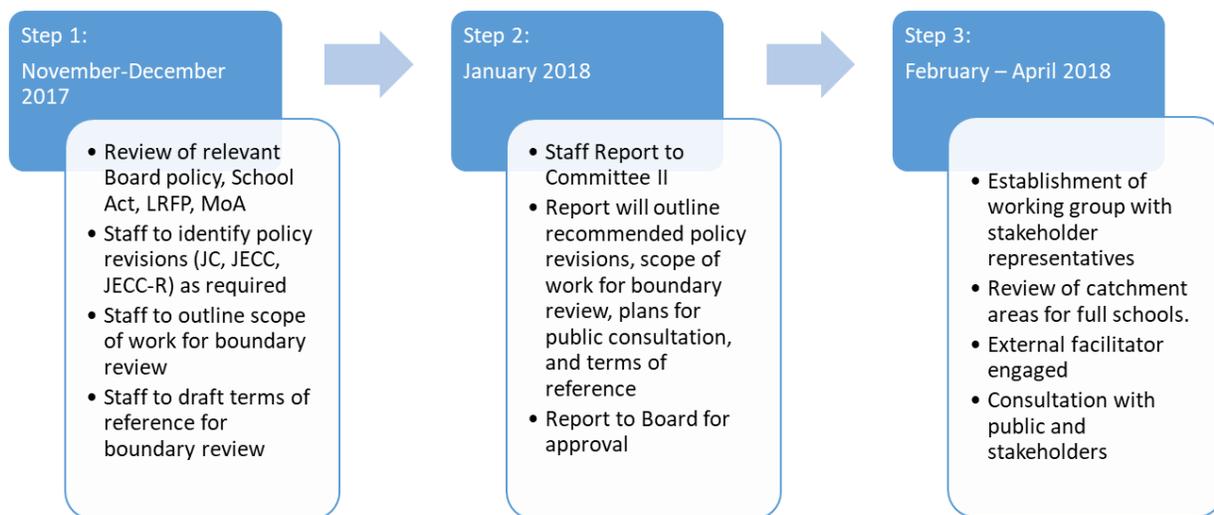
The VSB Senior Management Team (SMT) will act as the Steering Committee to receive the findings and recommendations of the Working Group, consider options for further consultation, and endorse final recommendations for Committee II.

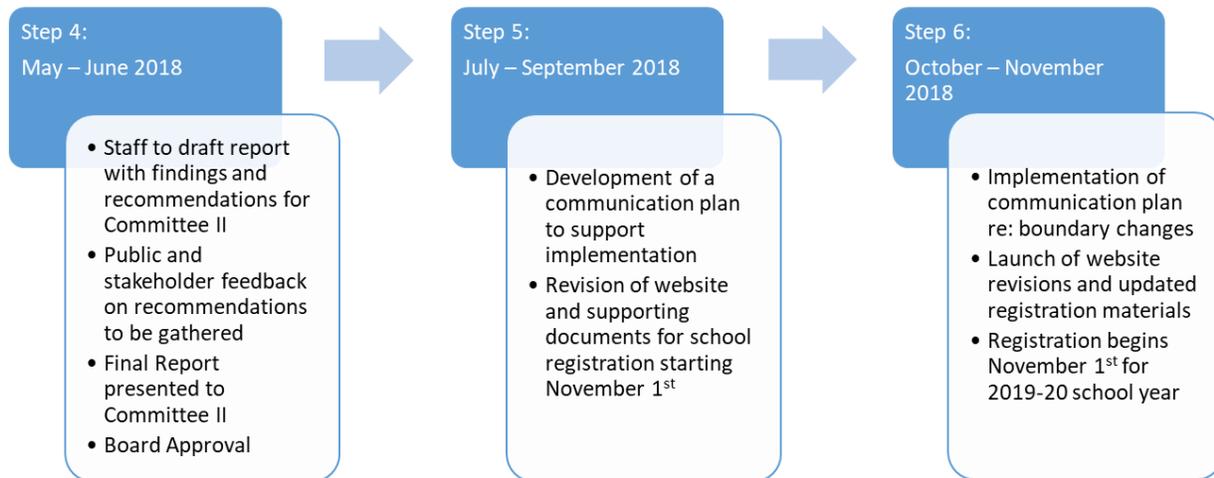
The main work of the catchment review will be undertaken by a Working Group comprised of each of the following district staff representatives:

- Secretary – Treasurer’s office
- Superintendent’s office
- Facilities Planning (2)
- DPAC
- VASSA
- VEPVPA
- VTF (2)

The Working Group will report findings and recommendations to the Steering Committee. Both the Steering Committee and the Working Group may be assisted by a Facilitator, whose role will be to facilitate meetings, ensure the timelines and milestone deliverables are met and that adequate information and communications are made available to stakeholders during the review.

## Timeline





The process will follow a timeline that is manageable given the scope of this review. This timeline will be dependent on the level of consultation undertaken as part of the review and any changes in scope approved by the Steering Committee and Committee II.