

VSB Preferred School Size Working Group

WORKING GROUP MEETING #5

DECEMBER 10, 2020

Indigenous Acknowledgement



Objectives

- Review summary of findings from Focus Group sessions
- Confirm proposed preliminary school size guidelines for VSB elementary and secondary schools
- Confirm next steps

Proposed Agenda

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 3:45 – 4:00 | Welcome, Introductions, Agenda and Ground rules |
| 4:00 – 4:45 | Summary of Focus Group findings |
| 4:45 – 5:15 | Elementary and Secondary Sub-Group Discussions |
| 5:15 – 6:15 | Report back and confirmation of preliminary guidelines |
| 6:10 – 6:15 | Summary and next steps |



- Everyone has wisdom
- We need everyone's wisdom for the wisest results
- Everyone will hear and be heard
- There are no wrong answers

- Help each other to stay focused on task and on topic
- Please don't use chat box during presentation

Overall
Purpose of
PSSWG
Process

Mandate: LRFP Recommendation – That the District establish guidelines on preferred student population (enrolment) size with the goal of determining appropriate ranges of school size to inform planning decisions.

Purpose: To review, consider and discuss educational and fiscal criteria, examine current practices and draft guidelines for preferred school population sizes for VSB elementary and secondary schools.

Overall Purpose of PSSWG Process

Purpose (continued)

It is anticipated that preferred school size (student enrolment) guidelines will facilitate effective future, evidence-informed and transparent planning decisions including:

- Adjusting school catchment areas
- Location of district programs
- Prioritization of capital requests for seismic projects
- New schools
- School additions, and
- Balancing capacity with enrolment which could involve school consolidation

Preliminary
Guidelines for
Preferred
School Size

Preliminary Guidelines for Preferred School Size (all factors considered)* Updated during **November 16** PSSWG meeting:

Elementary School Size Guidelines = range of 300 –550 enrolled students

Secondary School Size Guidelines = range of 1200 –1750 enrolled students

Preliminary Guidelines for Preferred School Size –

Other Considerations

Other factors to be considered include:

- Student travel to school
- Creating community hubs
- Future growth areas in relation to City of Vancouver planning
- Ensuring connectedness for all students
- Sufficient play space (inside and out)
- A feeling of support, community and cohesion in schools
- Future review of guidelines in relation to best practices for infectious diseases/ viruses, etc.

Focus Groups – Summary of Feedback

Purpose: to review and provide feedback on Preliminary PSSWG School Size Guidelines

Nov 19 – DPAC – 9 participants

Nov 20 – IUOE and CUPE – 5 participants

Nov 23 – VSTA – 9 participants

Nov 24 – VEPVPA – 9 participants

Nov 25 – VASSA – 9 participants

VESTA – Feedback through Working Group representative



Focus Groups very helpful

- Changes made to the presentation to improve delivery over time
 - Intended use of guidelines as per our Terms of Reference
 - Clarification re: TOO small and TOO large vs. what we like about small and large schools
 - Included slides with feedback from Working Group process
- Clear and consistent themes emerged across all groups
- Specific feedback on secondary and elementary guidelines

Focus Group Feedback –

Strong themes

1. Information provided was helpful to the conversation
2. Concern: guidelines being used in isolation
3. Concern: guidelines being used to close/amalgamate existing schools
4. Concern: schools not within guidelines being perceived as not providing the best educational environment
5. Multiple track schools are different than single track schools
6. Guidelines are needed
7. Query: District enrolment projections are accurate
8. Need for sufficient space in new school builds

Focus Group
Feedback –

Other

- DPAC – level of parent input into the planning process
- IUOE and CUPE would like to be part of any future discussions re: school sizing

1. Information provided was helpful to the conversation

Appreciation for information used during this process

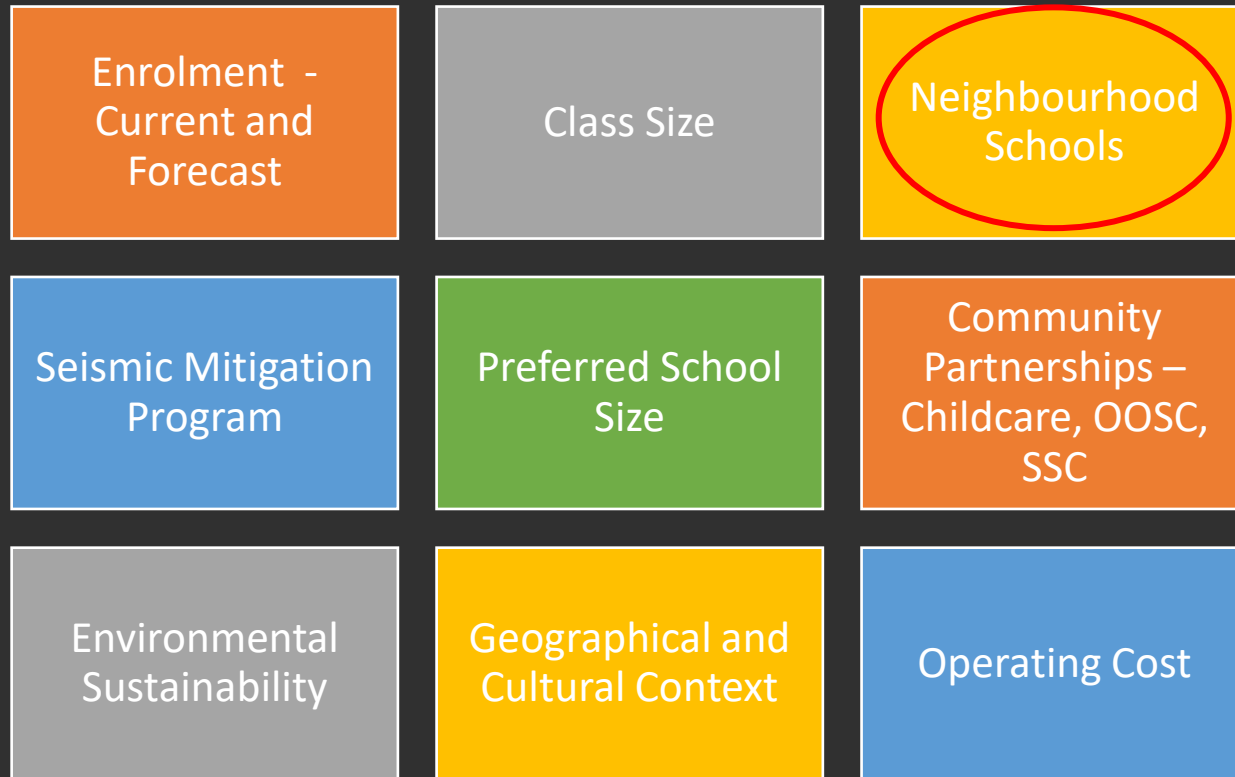
2. Concern: guidelines being used in isolation

Guidelines being used in isolation, or greater weight being placed on guidelines than other considerations

- E.g., student distance to schools and creating community hubs
- Attendance by students at risk directly tied to proximity

Reiterated: school size guidelines would not be used in isolation; one in a series of factors considered during planning and decision-making

Concern re: school size in relation to other Planning Considerations



[LRFP Strategy 2020-2030](#)
[\(Appendix D pp 24-36\)](#)

3. Concern: guidelines being used to consolidate existing schools

E.g., Used as a rationale to consolidate schools independent from any seismic or other capital projects

Reiterated that the District will continue to have schools that don't fall within the guidelines

4. Concern: schools not within guidelines being perceived as not providing the best educational environment

Schools currently not within guidelines are highly regarded by parents, students, teachers and administrators

Reiterated that very good schools may fall outside of the guidelines; guidelines are only one planning consideration

5. Multiple track schools are different than single track schools

Programming within dual/multiple track schools operates somewhat separately

A school may fall within the guidelines, but separate streams may experience concerns associated with schools of smaller size, such as:

- Student choice for courses, and
- Student distribution across classes

Dual or triple track schools may need to exceed the guidelines to meet needs of each stream

6. Guidelines are needed

School size guidelines are useful as one planning consideration in combination with many others (student travel to school, development plans, etc.) to support decision-making

- Given planning with respect to capital planning/ seismic upgrades

7. Query: District enrolment projections are accurate

Reiterated that guidelines are agnostic to growth

- Guidelines speak to preferred school size, independent of whether overall District enrollment is going up or down

The District is involved in major development planning processes and comments on related impacts

8. Need for sufficient space in new school builds

* Not directly related to school size guidelines

Parents, unions representatives, teachers, and administrators expressed concerns about the lack of space in new school builds for:

- Storage space
- Gymnasiums
- Libraries
- Sensory rooms
- Flex space, and
- Future growth

Information shared re: Seismic Mitigation Program, and Ministry processes and requirements

3 factors in relation to school size

1. Student achievement
2. School Organization and Staffing, Student Programs and Services
3. Financial considerations

Preliminary
Secondary
School
Guidelines

Specific
Feedback

Strong support for guidelines

School size directly linked to
equity for students

- Choices for academic courses
- Co-curricular course offerings
- Extra-curricular offerings
- Supports for students

Preliminary Guidelines for Secondary Schools

Other feedback

- Many schools currently outside of the preferred range are functioning well (great effort by teachers and admin)
- Feedback on the lower end of the range varied
- VASSA participants expressed unanimous support for the guidelines
- Some teachers prefer smaller schools for the strong sense of community, even though there are more preps, splits, etc.
- Don't want financial considerations to be the main driver for guidelines

Preliminary
Elementary
School
Guidelines

Specific
Feedback

Support for Preliminary Guidelines for Elementary Schools

More staff and resources to support each other and students

More options to organize schools to effectively address class composition

Smaller schools – less specialized support and teachers often take on multiple roles

Preliminary Elementary School Guidelines

Specific Feedback (cont.)

Concerns about Preliminary Guidelines for Elementary Schools

- Strong support for smaller schools (neighbourhood, inclusion, etc.)
- Differing levels of support for lower end of range at 300
- Would like threshold for elementary VP to be lower than 400
- Don't want financial considerations to be the main driver for guidelines

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Small Group Discussions

What does focus group feedback mean for these preliminary guidelines for preferred school size?

Date	Meeting	Focus
February 10	PSSWG Meeting #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro, overview, process agreements, base case, research, etc.
March 9	PSSWG Meeting #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Organization and Staffing Considerations Student Programs and Services
October 8	PSSWG Meeting #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and other considerations
November 16	PSSWG Meeting #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seismic Mitigation Program Considerations Preliminary Guidelines
November 19-25	Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPAC, IUOE/CUPE, VSTA, VEPVPA, VASSA
December 10	PSSWG Meeting #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm findings
January 21, 2021 (TBC)	[PSSWG Meeting #6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review PSSWG comments re: Final Report
TBD 2021	Presentation of PSSWG Report to FPC	

Preferred School Size Working Group – Meeting Schedule

Next Steps



Prepare meeting summary of December 10 PSSWG Meeting #5 and post on [Preferred School Size Working Group](#) with PowerPoint presentation.

Draft Final PSSWG Report

Circulate Draft PSSWG Report to Working Group by mid-January

Meeting #5 (TBC) – January 21, 2021 – 3:30- 4:45 to discuss PSSWG comments on Draft Report

Final PSSWG Report submitted to FPC and senior management in 2021 (TBD)