
Administrative Memorandum

Regular Board Meeting

Date: September 19, 2018
Topic: Capital Motion – Eliminating Portables
Submitted by: Jordan Tinney, Superintendent of Schools/CEO

Background:

In the fall of 2016, as part of their election campaign, the NDP promised, if elected, to eliminate all portables in Surrey within four years. At the time, this was a significant commitment. The Board of Education welcomes any strategy, regardless of government, to reduce our reliance on portables where we currently house well over 7000 students.

In the fall of 2017 the new Education Minister reaffirmed the new government's commitment to a four year plan and indications were that substantial progress could be made. In August 2018, the Minister is quoted as saying: "We will finally be able to plan in advance of growth and start getting rid of portables in the very near future."

Once again, the Board commends the government's commitment and are pleased to have several projects announced by this new government including:

- Seismic upgrades to Bear Creek and Mary Jane Shannon;
- Additions to Pacific Heights Elementary, Coyote Creek Elementary, Frost Road Elementary and Sullivan Heights Secondary; and
- New schools - Regent Road Elementary, Douglas area Elementary, Grandview (Edgewood) Elementary.

By any measure, this is substantial progress with nine projects announced by this new government not including acquiring sites for additional schools. These nine projects represent 3115 new seats for Surrey students. We are thankful for the commitments, collaboration and announcements but our need remains great.

This year, we are projected to grow by 700 students and as at the time of this memo, we are well over 1000 new students to Surrey. If we completed all nine of the above projects in two years, which would be a highly aggressive and unprecedented schedule, we would have reduced our reliance on portables from our current 345 to 300 (at 25 students/portable). While we would have added 3115 seats, we also will have grown by 2000 new students in those two years.

The school district has a detailed and strategic long range Capital Plan which is reviewed and renewed annually. If we received news from the Ministry of Education that we have suddenly received a windfall of approximately \$300M, and we were directed to complete the top 15 projects on our Annual Capital Plan in addition to the above nine projects, we would add about 7500 new seats. If it took us five years to complete these 24 new projects which would be a

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massive and welcomed undertaking, our continued student growth would add 5000 new students which would still require 200 portables. The ability to significantly reduce our reliance on portables requires a comprehensive strategic plan along with an extended funding commitment.

We are asking the Ministry of Education to continue to work with our Board of Education and our Capital Project Office to develop a comprehensive strategic five year capital plan with the intent to reduce our reliance on portables by 50% by the year 2023.

Such a strategic investment would consider the 7000 students we already have in portables, and the 5000 students we will grow in five years. This is the equivalent of constructing an entire school district the size of New Westminster in that time frame and we believe this is achievable with continued cooperation of the Ministry and the City of Surrey who are our key partners.

It is recommended:

THAT the Board of Education write to the Minister of Education requesting a meeting to discuss government's commitment to the elimination of portables in Surrey and how we can establish an interim plan to reduce our reliance on portables by 50% within five years.
