

Dr. George M. Weir Elementary
2900 East 44th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5R 3A8

Minutes for Tuesday, February 19, 2019 PAC Meeting

Date and Time: Tuesday, February 19, 2019, 6:30pm-8:00pm

Location: Dr. George M. Weir staffroom

PAC Attendance (in order of sign-in sheet): Julie Guan, Kevin So, Rose Pan, Brian Yip, Jessica Wong, Dora Cheung, Patricia Com, William Lee, Lisa Mak, Christopher Szeto, Margaret Szeto, Winnie Huang, Cecelia Lok, Kiran Viridi, Jo Neill, Gloria Duong, Veronica Lau

PAC Executives:

Chair: Hailey Wong
Co-Chair: Maxine Shiu
Treasurer: Marsella Lim
Secretary: JoAnn Kamimura

Administrators:

Principal: Heather Gascoigne
Vice-Principal: Cindy Neufeld

1. Call to Order: Hailey Wong, 6:35pm
2. Introduction of the Vancouver Project Office (VPO) of the Seismic Mitigation Program:

Chris Wong - District Principal
Natasha Saksman - Project Manager
Janson Ho - Vancouver Project Office Director

3. Opening Remarks by Chris Wong regarding the seismic status of Dr. George M. Weir Elementary, and further information provided by Natasha Saksman and Janson Ho.
 - Approval has been given to move ahead with seismic upgrade of Weir Elementary after assessing the risk level to the school in the event of an earthquake, and completing an analysis of the cost to replace or reinforce the existing school
 - Weir Elementary consists of 4 blocks: 1 gym block, 1 library block, and 2 classroom blocks (consisting of the original building and the 2001 extension) - 3 of the 4 blocks are assessed as high risk.

- It has been decided that the gym, library, and original classroom blocks of Weir Elementary will be demolished and rebuilt. The 2001 extension is seismically sound and will not need to be replaced or upgraded.
- The BC government has approved \$19 million towards the partial rebuild of Weir Elementary .
- The seismic project for Weir Elementary is currently in the Design Phase, which is expected to last from February 2019 to March 2020. Construction is slated to begin after this, with the hope that Weir Elementary will reopen in January 2022.
- Temporary Accommodation goals - to maintain the educational program of Weir, to determine what existing class space is available, and to find the best location of this space for Weir students and staff.
- With these goals in mind, the following locations have been chosen: MacCorkindale Elementary, Champlain Heights Elementary, and Killarney Secondary School.

4. Floor opened to parental questions:

Q: Will the new school have a cafeteria for students to eat lunch?

A: No. Cafeterias are not generally built for elementary schools. Students will most likely continue to eat in their classrooms.

Q: Will classrooms be larger in the new school?

A: No, the classroom size will be smaller, but are designed with 21st century learning in mind. The Ministry of Education determines school size.

Q: Will Weir Elementary have its 2 existing covered areas replaced when they are demolished with the partial rebuild?

A: No, the covered areas will not be replaced at the rebuilt school.

Q: Why won't Weir have any undercover areas? With all the rain and snow Vancouver receives, it seems unreasonable to not have shelter for the children during recess, lunch, before and after school.

A: Undercover Areas are not allowed under current guidelines. Parents should take their concerns to their MLA to advocate for change to this policy.

Q: Can't the seismic upgrade wait until there is space to place all the Weir students in elementary schools, and not use a secondary school as a swing site?

A: We wish to proceed with the seismic upgrades to schools in a timely manner. It could be a long time before adequate space is available to accommodate Weir's large

population. Also, delaying the project to wait for enough spaces in only elementary schools would increase construction costs.

Q: How will Weir students be kept separate and 'safe' from the high school students at Killarney Secondary?

A: The Grade 6 and 7 students will be relocating to Killarney Secondary. The District Principal has already spoken with Killarney Secondary administration about the upcoming arrival of Weir Elementary students. There will be a wing dedicated to Weir students and staff, separate from the main high school population. High school students will not be permitted in this area. This "B" wing will have its own entrances. Weir students will have their own washrooms to use, and will have their recess and lunch at different times from the Killarney Secondary schedule. An additional supervision aide will be hired to work at the Killarney site. There should be minimal, if any, interactions with any of the high school students.

Q: The "B" wing is located next to what is known as the "smoke pit", where high school students are often seen smoking and vaping. How is this a safe environment for young children?

A: No smoking or vaping is permitted on school grounds. The Killarney administration is aware of the situation and has promised to deal with this issue. We have been assured that this issue will not be a concern by the time the Weir students are transferred to the Killarney swing site location.

Q: Has the situation of putting elementary students into a high school swing site occurred before in Vancouver?

A: Not previously, but Selkirk Elementary will also be relocating their Grade 6 and 7's for seismic upgrading to Gladstone Secondary.

Q: Will Weir students be bused to the swing school site?

A: Yes, school buses will be available to the elementary swing schools. A survey will be taken to ask which families would want to use the option of being bused to school. Some parents may already drive their child(ren) to Weir school and wish to continue to drive to their swing school, or they may live closer to the swing school and choose to walk. School bus service will not be necessary for the Killarney Secondary swing site due to its close proximity to Weir Elementary. Further information will become available in the future.

Q: How will students be bused to the swing schools?

A: Parents will be responsible to get their children to the buses in the morning. Attendance will be taken at the schools when the students get off the bus. At the end of the school day, attendance will be taken again to make sure everyone gets on the bus to be taken back to the designated pick-up/drop-off zone at Weir.

Q: What happens if no one is there to pick up a student?

A: No child will be left unattended after school. There is a “missing parent protocol” in place. The bus drivers will wait to make sure all the children are picked up. If a child does not get picked up, the bus driver will drive the child back to their swing school and the administration there will contact the parent/guardian to come pick up their child at the swing school.

Q: Will after school care at Killarney Community Centre (KCC) be impacted by this move?

A: No, KCC after school care will meet the buses at designated spot (just as they currently do at Weir), take attendance, and walk the whole group back to Killarney Community Centre.

Q: Do the Weir students become part of the school population of their swing schools?

A: No, Weir students will not be blended into the host swing school populations. Weir Elementary continues to exist as a school. Weir students will remain together in their own classes, taught by Weir teachers, and overseen by Weir administrators, just as they currently are.

Heather Gascoigne, Principal, suggested that perhaps Killarney Community Centre could be used as a “hub” - a place for the students to come together 2-3 times a year to maintain the feeling of Weir community. Perhaps movie nights, winter/spring concerts, or sports day could be held there so the students could all be together.

Q: How will parents be kept informed of what is coming up regarding this seismic upgrade at Weir?

A: More information will be released in the future. A school Seismic Advisory Committee will be the main source for parents to get information/communication
Hailey Wong, PAC Chair, urged parents to check regularly with the PAC website, www.weirpac.weebly.com, and sign up to receive regular PAC emails to keep up to date on not only seismic news, but also about upcoming events and news at Weir Elementary.

5. Meeting Adjourned at 7:55pm.