

# Getting Henry Hudson's Seismic Project Definition Right

**Background - Hudson is high risk:** Henry Hudson Elementary is 107 years old. In the event of an earthquake it is very likely that the school will collapse. The main structure is classed at the highest seismic risk level in the province's Seismic Mitigation Program: "High 1" ("H1"). As of June 2018, Hudson is in the "business case development" phase of the seismic mitigation program.

**The issue – we need to get the project definition right to accommodate present and future needs:** There is a significant risk of a new or retrofitted Hudson school being too small to accommodate future growth and critical programs such as the school's hot lunch program, before and after school care, and other non-enrolling space needs. Current provincial area standards on which the design parameters of new/rebuilt schools are based are inadequate to address these issues, and result in schools that are not built to the size required to provide critical programs.

- **Hudson's project definition must account for critical programs and population growth**
- **In general, the BC Ministry of Education needs to amend the area standards to ensure that new/rebuilt schools can accommodate these needs.**

- **Population growth needs to be accounted for:** Hudson is currently over capacity at 123% - the second most overcrowded elementary school in the VSB. Population projections show continued growth. All non-enrolling classrooms have been repurposed to enrolling use, putting important learning programs at risk. It is not sensible to be back in this situation in a new school.
- **There must be space for Hudson Out of School Care:** Due to higher school enrolment, children are now forced to age out of Hudson's on-site care program at 8 years, leaving parents with few options. The BC government intervened this spring to stop the potential loss of on-site childcare spaces as Hudson's growth threatened to push out the childcare program, recognizing the importance of this program. Space for childcare must be preserved in the project definition.
- **Space for hot lunch fundraiser program must be preserved:** This is Hudson's primary means to raise funds for the school and losing it puts extra-curricular activities at significant risk. Kitchen facilities and dining space to operate this fundraiser for the school brings in about \$15,000 per year which is spent on technology, subsidies for students whose families cannot afford field trips, school supplies, and assistance for families that cannot afford hot lunch.
- **French immersion needs to be properly planned for:** Hudson only has one French immersion kindergarten due to space constraints, despite the recommendation in recent VSB consultations that all immersion schools offer two. The project definition should plan to accommodate additional immersion divisions to account for two kindergarten cohorts.
- **Space for specialty programs to meet the BC curriculum:** There is a recognized need for the reading recovery program at Hudson, and a significant number of students with special needs. Attending to these needs, and accommodating the individualized learning called for in the new BC curriculum, requires spaces outside of the primary classroom.
- **Adequate non-enrolling classroom space:** All the spaces formerly used for a lunchroom and staff room have been converted to classroom use, and the lack of non-enrolling classroom space has made the delivery of arts, music, science and computer programming difficult.