

Imagine the possibilities:

UBC/University Endowment Lands schools project

Educational Facilities Review Phase 1 – UBC to Dunbar

In January 2008, the Vancouver Board of Education initiated an Educational Facilities Review of its schools in the University of B.C. to Dunbar neighbourhoods of Vancouver. The district needed to address three challenges: educational priorities, financial sustainability and seismic mitigation of existing schools.

An outcome of that process was a new way of envisioning how to organize and deliver education – the creation of Neighbourhoods of Learning within a Network of Learning. The UBC to Dunbar Neighbourhood of Learning development plan, which was approved by the board last June, is designed to guide future decision making for the area.

Since then, the VSB and UBC have been negotiating the transfer of the National Research Council building (3250 East Mall). Concurrently, the district has been developing the educational framework for the UBC/UEL schools. This framework is ready to go to the public for consultation, with the goal of final Project Development Report being received by provincial government no later than Jan. 30, 2008.

Educational Framework

The Vancouver Board of Education has a rare and unique opportunity to establish an educational program and set of facilities that will combine the best professional practices, physical facilities and educational resources to serve and fulfill the learning of students in a common community.

We envision:

- An interconnected set of facilities that will accommodate a continuum of learning and development from early childhood to adulthood as a family of schools within the UBC community.
- Progressive, engaging schools that are grounded in the essentials of optimum learning while utilizing partnerships to connect the educational program with the full capacities and prospects of our students.
- Connecting with children and their families at an early age and provide consistency and continuity in their learning experience throughout each subsequent stage of their development – primary, later childhood and early adolescence, later adolescence and early adulthood.
- A major emphasis on engagement and experiential learning through direct engagement in experiences of interest and relevance to the learner. This would take multiple forms, such as: project-based learning; field studies; community involvement; and school-based activities, all of which would be highly experiential and hands-on.
- Collaborative and cooperative learning processes among learners as peers and between older and younger students would be integral to the educational program and may extend to the direct and regular involvement of UBC undergrad and graduate students.

- A science and technology focus, but not at the exclusion of other disciplines and interests. It could effectively draw upon the human and physical resources on campus and within faculties, such as science, humanities and fine arts.

The VSB, both as an organization and an educational enterprise, has made a commitment to pursue sustainability in all its functions as an environmentally- and socially-responsive institution, involving and supporting our students as engaged learners and citizens in this regard. Further, we are committed to recognizing and expanding our students' awareness of, and contributions to, causes of global citizenship.

The VSB's university family of schools has an opportunity to build deep and extensive ties with the UBC Faculty of Education. With the proximity of the schools to the campus and variety of programs offered at the schools, it is a logical extension that the faculty, student teachers and teachers would work together to study and improve teaching and learning.

Building for the future

The Vancouver Board of Education envisions redeveloping the National Research Council Building to create a Grade 9-12 school.

The Acadia Road site, currently home to University Hill Secondary school, will be redeveloped, creating essentially two schools within a school. Kindergarten through Grade 5 will be housed in one wing, while a second wing will house Grades 6-8, with the two schools sharing core facilities to maximize learning opportunities. The Acadia Road site will also allow for expansion as the south campus area grows in the future.

The current University Hill Elementary school will be realigned to create a kindergarten through Grade 5 school, which is more appropriately matched to the building's capacity. University Hill Elementary school was built for 380 students.

The first phase of public consultation on the UBC/UEL schools project will be focused on the educational framework only. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on building design at a later date.