
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

Safer schools coming to better protect Vancouver students

VANCOUVER – Hundreds of families, students and staff in Vancouver can look forward to safer schools as funding for seismic upgrades has been approved for Lord Byng Secondary, Lord Selkirk Elementary and Dr. George M. Weir Elementary schools.

“Families in Vancouver have been waiting for years for government to take action to better protect their children in the event of a major earthquake,” said Rob Fleming, Minister of Education. “Today’s announcement is another great step toward safer schools for Vancouver students, and we’ll keep working with the Vancouver School District until every student is in a seismically safe learning environment.”

The Province has approved funding of \$40.6 million to upgrade the three schools, each of which has a high seismic risk. Government has now approved nearly \$230 million since September 2017 to seismically upgrade or replace nine schools in Vancouver, or more than 5,800 student spaces.

“A key priority of the Vancouver School District is to ensure all students attend seismically safe schools as quickly as possible,” said Janet Fraser, Vancouver School District Board chair. “We are pleased with the ministry’s announcement today as it brings us another step closer to providing seismically safe learning environments for all of the district’s students and staff.”

With work now approved to proceed, the Vancouver School District will engage with the school communities — including parents, students and staff — as the projects move forward. This includes the use of swing space during construction for Weir Elementary students and for students in grades 6 and 7 at Lord Selkirk Elementary. Students from kindergarten to Grade 5 at Lord Selkirk Elementary and all students at Lord Byng Secondary will remain on their school sites during construction.

“I’m thrilled to see that the Province has provided funding for not one but three schools to be seismically upgraded,” said Suzanne Hoffman, superintendent, Vancouver School District. “We look forward to working with all three school communities in the coming months to facilitate this vital work.”

Government is working to accelerate the Seismic Mitigation Program and give every B.C. student a seismically safe school as soon as possible.

Since September 2017, the Province has approved nearly \$1 billion in capital projects, which includes nearly \$550 million to seismically upgrade or replace more than 17,800 student spaces at 28 schools throughout B.C.

Quotes:

David Eby, MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey —

“This is great news for the parents of children attending Lord Byng Secondary school, who will now be able to breathe a sigh of relief knowing their kids will learn in a seismically safe environment.”

Melanie Mark, MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant —

“Every student deserves to learn in safe, positive and healthy facilities, and I am thrilled Lord Selkirk will have this much-needed upgrade.”

George Chow, MLA for Vancouver-Fraserview —

“The safety of our students and staff is paramount, and this is such welcome news for the George M. Weir school community.”

Quick Facts:

- The \$18.2-million project to upgrade Lord Byng Secondary will see the school’s workshop, gymnasium, cafeteria and auditorium upgraded. Construction is expected to begin in summer 2019 and to be completed in summer 2021.
- The \$5.7-million project to upgrade Lord Selkirk Elementary includes an upgrade of one building of the school. Lord Selkirk has three buildings, two of which were upgraded in 1996 and are seismically safe. The building being upgraded is a Heritage A category building built in two phases between 1898 and 1922. The heritage design of the building undergoing seismic upgrade will be retained. Construction is expected to begin in early 2020 and to be completed in summer 2021.
- The \$16.7-million project to upgrade Weir Elementary includes a partial replacement of the school, which consists of classrooms, the gymnasium and the library. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2020 and to be completed in late 2021.
- In Vancouver, the Province has approved nearly \$230 million for seismic upgrades or replacements at nine schools since September 2017:
 - Bayview Elementary: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017PREM0097-001714>
 - Sir Matthew Begbie Elementary: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017PREM0097-001714>
 - David Lloyd George Elementary: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018EDUC0003-000040>
 - Eric Hamber Secondary: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018EDUC0033-001221>
 - General Wolfe Elementary: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018EDUC0056-001886>
 - Edith Cavell Elementary: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018EDUC0056-001886>
 - Lord Byng Secondary
 - Lord Selkirk Elementary
 - Dr. George M. Weir elementary

Learn More:

To connect with the Vancouver School Board, visit: <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/>

For more information about B.C.’s Seismic Mitigation Program:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/capital/seismic-mitigation>

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