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Questions and Answers about Burke Mountain Schools (October 2017)

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How are new school site locations determined?

Based on birth rate information, the amount of housing, the type of housing, migration rates, and census data in the area that is designated within the municipality's Official Community Plan (OCP), the school district is able to project the amount of schools that will be needed to service a community.

Once population projections are confirmed, the school district is able to determine the overall student count which is then broken down into the amount of schools needed at each school level (elementary, middle and secondary). The school district works with the municipality to determine the number and location of the schools to best service the needs of the community. The district determines school site locations by factors that include availability of sites, surrounding community structures, suitability of sites, and cost analysis. All factors included enable the school district to work with the municipality to determine the best available site for future schools.

How are enrolment projections developed?

Enrolment projections for the school district are created using information from a variety of sources. School district staff meet with municipal staff regularly to receive updates on housing projections and future development. With assistance from a consultant, birth rates, migration rates, census and other data, along with housing yield rates are included in the enrolment projection calculations. Participation rates in public schools as well as participation in Programs of Choice are also incorporated.

When determining the need for schools, the Ministry of Education looks at a number of factors including current and future enrolment at the individual school as well as neighbouring schools. Available capacity at existing nearby schools is factored into the projected timeline for requiring a new school. When funding for a new school is approved, the new school is planned with a future addition in mind to help accommodate any potential further growth in an area.

What will the capacity be at each of the schools?

Capacity at each school is based on enrolment projections and is approved by the Ministry of Education. The capacity for each school level in the Burke Mountain community will be approximately 400-500 students for elementary, 600-700 students for middle, and 1000-1200 students for secondary.

What steps are involved when obtaining land for a school?

School district land purchases are funded through a combination of School Site Acquisition Charges (SSAC), restricted capital held by the district, and on occasion through provincial contributions or land grants. A number of steps take place prior to the acquisition of school land:

1. The school district submits to the Province an Annual Capital Plan with projected needs.
2. The school district submits a "snapshot" analysis that outlines basic details of the proposed school along with general requirements of the site.
3. The school district submits preliminary analysis of a potential site including Phase 1 Environmental Analysis and geotechnical work.
4. Approval is obtained from the Ministry to obtain conditional purchase agreements.
5. Land is assembled.
6. Approval is obtained by the Board of Education subject to information from land appraisals.
7. Approval is obtained from the Province in order to access funds.

What is the funding process for the construction of schools?

Traditionally, funding for the construction of new schools came from the Ministry of Education. Recently, funding for new construction has mainly been approved under the seismic umbrella with only a few examples of funding for new schools due to lifecycle or enrolment pressures. Through the Ministry's new Capital Management Strategy, school districts may be asked to contribute up to 50% of the funding of capital projects (including funds realized from the disposition of surplus lands). A number of steps take place prior to approval to construct:

1. The school district submits an Annual Capital Plan with projected needs.
2. A suitable site is secured and approved.
3. The school district submits a Project Request Fact Sheet (PRFS) formerly the Projection Information Report (PIR) when initial project approval for further investigation is obtained.
4. The school district submits a Project Definition Report (PDR) which includes more detailed analysis.
5. Approval is obtained with a Project Agreement (PA) from the Ministry which includes funding specifics.

What are the steps for building a new school after funding and approval are provided by the Ministry of Education?

After Ministry approval and funding are provided, a Project Architect is engaged. The District Design team and the Facilities team work with the architect on the design of the building. This is followed by the permitting process, tendering of the project, and then construction.

What parameters are used to prioritize SD43's Capital Plan projects?

Items are prioritized based on many factors including seismic risk, enrolment changes, and facility age and building condition.

What is the current status on the first elementary school in the Smiling Creek neighbourhood?

As our Board took the proactive approach of providing preliminary funding, no delays have occurred to date. School district staff worked with architects and the City of Coquitlam on the planning and design of the school and park site. Funding and approval was provided by the Province. The school is under construction and projected to open in September 2018 as planned.

What is the status of obtaining the other Burke Mountain school sites?

SD43 has sites secured for the Sheffield and Marigold Elementary schools as well as for the middle and secondary schools. Having the sites will allow us to move more quickly through the planning process. We have also been working with the City of Coquitlam on making the joint middle/secondary school site a joint park/school site that will allow for mutual benefits for the school and community.

How will you accommodate students until the first elementary school is built?

While the first elementary school is constructed, additional classroom space was added to Leigh and Irvine Elementary schools. Classroom space was also available at other nearby schools.

Why did you decide to build an elementary school first?

Enrolment projections indicated that we were in need of additional elementary spaces first as there was limited open capacity at neighbouring elementary schools. Current enrolment and enrolment projections indicate that we have open capacity at neighbouring middle and secondary schools. For example, Minnehada Middle currently has approximately 435 students and has a capacity of 600 students.

What is the timeline for the other Burke Mountain schools to open?

We are currently undergoing our regular annual review of our enrolment projections to see if the proposed school opening dates shared with the Burke Mountain community in June 2015 and updated on our website in 2016 will remain as is or may be moved based on updated demographic data. When the enrolment projection review is completed, we will re-assess the timeline for proposed new schools on Burke Mountain.

How will the school district manage two schools on one site?

The school district has multiple school sites that use shared commodities. In the school district we have shared/adjacent sites with elementary and middle schools as well as a joint middle/secondary school site. Eagle Mountain Middle and Heritage Woods Secondary in Anmore/Port Moody is an excellent example of a middle school and secondary school located on one site. Strategies that have been working very well include two separate drop-off and pick-up areas, separate parking areas, staggered start and end times, and additional gym space or parking space for programs/activities. It is also convenient to set up mentorships or joint programming such as a joint school choir for both older and younger students.

Will there be additional school sites needed? What will you do if there is a need for additional space?

School sites are always planned with additions in mind so if there is a need for additional space, the school district will be able to accommodate. The City of Coquitlam is currently in the visioning stage for Northwest Burke Mountain. Once the planning stage is complete for that area, a determination will be made if an additional site is required.

How are catchment areas developed?

Catchment areas are carefully developed through the collection and analysis of data from several sources including enrolment projections, existing school populations, school age children residency, and other sources. Diligent and careful planning is put into the process to ensure the catchment areas are sustainable and allow for student enrolment to be balanced among neighbouring schools. Not all students who live near a school may fall within the official catchment area based on the data and analysis outcomes.

When will the Smiling Creek catchment be announced?

The Smiling Creek catchment will be announced in January, 2018 prior to the kindergarten registration and the cross-catchment process.

How are the locations of Programs of Choice decided?

SD43 has several Programs of Choice including Mandarin Bilingual, French Immersion, Montessori and others. Programs of Choice are placed at schools that have available capacity after in-catchment students are placed. Our priority is to provide opportunities for catchment students to attend the school before adding a Program of Choice

Is additional space at Smiling Creek being planned?

All new schools are built with an addition in mind. Pre-siting locations for an addition and portables are included in the planning process. Enrolment projections are reviewed and updated annually based on information provided by the City and other sources described above. An addition at Smiling Creek was included in the District's 2018-2019 Capital Plan submission to the Ministry of Education as a forward thinking measure as a result of the recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling which includes composition in the overall classroom count needs.

How are Daycare or Preschool classroom rental locations decided in schools?

Daycare or preschool rentals are placed at schools that have available space once school enrolment needs are determined.

What is the process for Smiling Creek registration?

The logistics for registration for Smiling Creek are still being worked on. The process will be communicated to catchment families in early 2018.

What is the next school planned for Burke Mountain?

Sheffield Elementary in the Partington Creek Neighbourhood is the next school planned for Burke Mountain.