



The Board of Education of School District No. 83

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: The Board of Education
FROM: Donna Kriger, Superintendent
RE: Salmon Arm Reconfiguration

DATE: November 19, 2024

Background

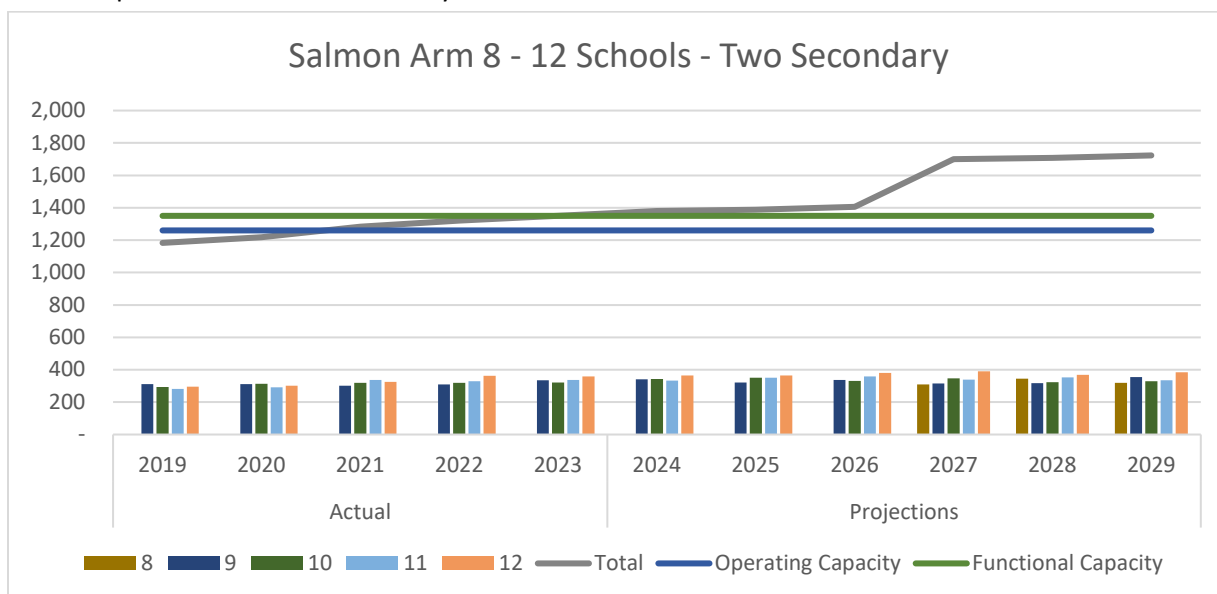
During the 2023-24 school year, the Board of Education directed the Superintendent to initiate public information and consultation sessions on the configuration of urban schools in Salmon Arm and their rural feeder schools. In June 2024, following this engagement, the Board approved an elementary school configuration of kindergarten to Grade 7 and a secondary configuration of Grades 8 to 12. At the June meeting, the Board also resolved to defer its decision on whether to adopt a two or three secondary school model in Salmon Arm, pending further information anticipated in fall 2024.

During the first few months of the 2024-25 school year, the Board reviewed updated information, including a proposed school transition plan, capital cost projections, potential projects supported by the Annual Facility Grant, and an impact analysis for both the two and three secondary school options.

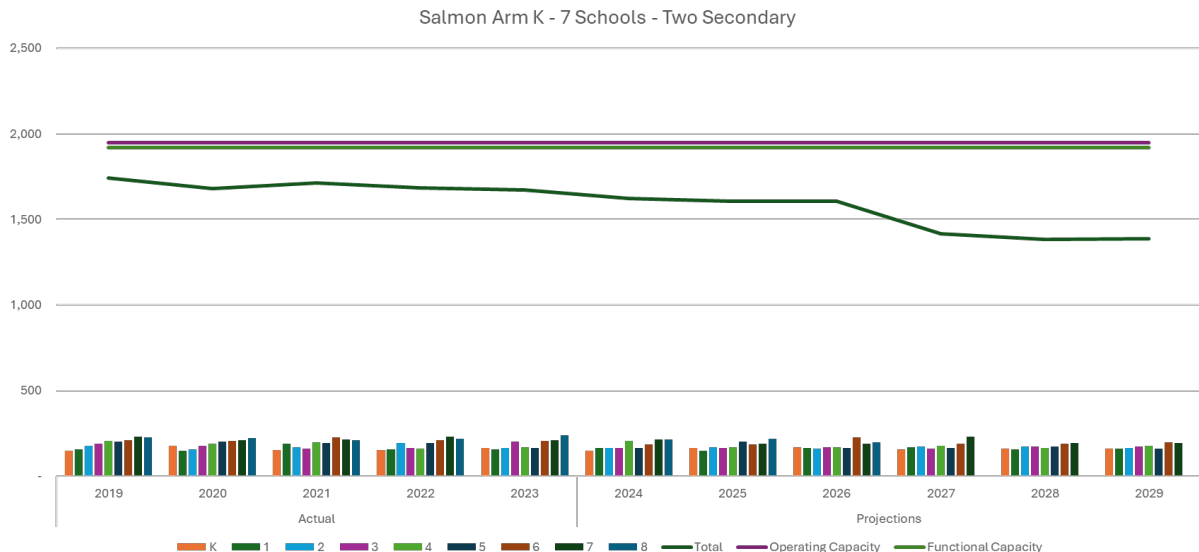
Under the Statement of Education Policy Order (Mandate for the School System) and with authority derived from Section 169(3) of the School Act, the Board has a duty to govern the district and its schools with fiscal responsibility. This includes prioritizing student access and achievement, school finance and facilities management, and accountability to parents, taxpayers, the community, and the province.

Information

The following graph illustrates the enrollment pressure that JL Jackson and Salmon Arm Secondary School would experience in a two-secondary model.



Unlike secondary schools, which are projected to exceed their operational capacity by 15-25%, elementary school enrollments in Salmon Arm are anticipated to be at approximately 75% utilization.

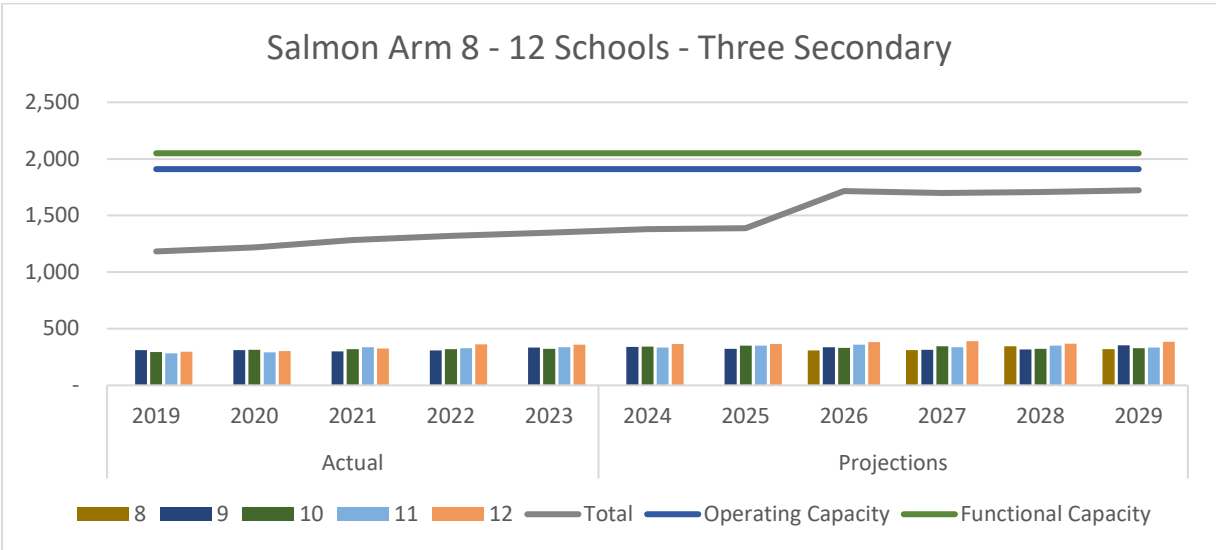


The following chart attempts to capture *some* of the challenges, possible solutions to the challenges, as well as the advantages for students in grades 8-12 in the two-secondary model.

Challenges	Potential Solutions to the Challenges	Advantages
- Utilization rates for JLI would be near 115% with SAS nearing 120-125%. - Pressure would be placed on elective spaces such as gym, shop areas, foods, and science labs. - Full school student assemblies would require students sitting in bleachers and floor space. - School (cafeterias/access to purchase food) would have significant pressure over the noon hour. - Hallway congestion would be amplified at JLI during class changes. - Additional spaces such as computer rooms, non-enrolling spaces, learning resource spaces, etc. within the secondary schools might need to be re-purposed. - The ability for students to acquire all “first choice” requests for courses would possibly be reduced.	- Separation curtains installed to divide gym space. - Enrollment in courses which are very popular may be filled on a priority basis, taking into consideration future pathways and grade levels of students. - A portion of science labs may need to shared or accessed on a “sign out” basis. - Assemblies could be done in a junior only & senior only fashion or by mixing some junior with some senior (commonly done in other places) or by having students sit on the gym floor. - The hallway congestion for schools built in that era are common across the province. - Space constraints could be alleviated through repurposing of spaces or through portables or a modular expansion project.	- Greater number of course sections for higher level math, science, and elective courses. - Increased ability for HR to recruit specialty teachers and hard to fill subject areas. - Strengthens the ability to create competitive athletic teams. - Increases the opportunity to find coaches for athletic teams. - Provides a wider range of extra-curricular opportunities, clubs, etc. based on a larger school staff. - Greater diversity of peer groups. - With a larger slate of courses, it may minimize the chance of students being required to take elective courses they aren’t interested in. - Provides opportunity for a more gradual student/staff friendly transition plan. - Based on economy of scale, a larger school might result in more resources and flexibility with budgets.

The two-secondary model poses space challenges for Grades 8 to 12; however, it preserves essential areas within elementary schools, such as multi-purpose rooms, breakfast program areas, sensory and regulation rooms, learning resource spaces, and potential future childcare facilities.

The following graph illustrates the enrollment outlook for JL Jackson, Salmon Arm Secondary School, and Shuswap Middle School under the two-secondary model. In contrast, with a three-secondary model, all secondary schools would maintain enrollments below operational capacity, with utilization rates around 80%.



In contrast, elementary schools are projected to exceed operational capacity by approximately 15%, with expected utilization rates reaching 135-140% at both Hillcrest and South Broadview Elementary Schools.

The following chart highlights the challenges of this model for elementary schools, as well as the potential benefits for secondary students in Grades 8 to 12.

Challenges	Advantages
- Fewer students result in fewer numbers of sections for the courses offered, resulting in less flexibility in student timetables. - The Salmon Arm community has struggled with moving toward two grad classes, it is unclear how they will feel if the division is three. - Creating a “family of schools” model may be less logical i.e. Geographical location & program vs. creating a feeder system for secondary schools based on balancing enrolment numbers and not necessarily geographic location. - Possible challenges with finding sufficient athletic coaches for three schools. - Subject “experts” may be more difficult to recruit due to lower numbers of specialty sections to teach. - Parking pressures at both SMS and JLJ will be challenging for secondary students.	- A smaller school population should result in teachers who know their students better than in a very large school. - Provided that sufficient coaches are available, more students could be involved in athletics and other extra-curricular clubs/activities. - Facility pressures in labs, shops, and gyms will be alleviated with a smaller enrollment. - Secondary staff could spend prep periods in their own classrooms. - There would not be a pressing need to convert current Learning Resource and Computer room spaces into classrooms.

While a three-secondary model reduces pressure on secondary schools, it places considerable strain on elementary schools. The following chart outlines the key challenges and potential benefits of this model for elementary schools.

Challenges	Advantages
- Elementary music teachers would need to provide music instruction within the regular classrooms resulting in a lower quality program. - Storage for musical instruments will be an issue. - Learning Resource and self-regulation rooms would be lost to free up additional classroom space. These spaces are widely used for diverse learners and the loss of these spaces will compromise privacy and student dignity. - Classroom teachers will need to leave their classes during prep time. - It will be difficult to find a space for targeted Tier II and Tier III intervention support in literacy, numeracy, speech pathology, etc. - Literacy Support Teachers often use the music spaces when they are available, for reading intervention. - When members of the Operations Department are in the building working, there will be no alternate space for classes to move to causing a delay in workorder completion. - Gym space will be difficult to schedule and outdoor classes with elementary students is not ideal. - Food programs would be negatively impacted due to a lack of space.	Larger elementary schools tend to run more efficiently due to economy of scale, resulting in school budgets that might provide more opportunity but also recognizing there will be more competing demands.

A two-secondary model presents challenges at the secondary level, while a three-secondary model shifts these challenges to the elementary level. Given the pressures on districts across the province due to immigration and migration trends, future capital projects to address utilization rates over 100% will require time to materialize. Key considerations for the Board to consider:

- Which age groups are most negatively impacted by over-utilized spaces?
- Is it reasonable to remove much needed regulation spaces for students who have diverse abilities?
- Which schools (secondary or elementary) have "flex" spaces that could justifiably be converted to classroom use?
- In a three-secondary model, secondary schools would each serve approximately 630 students, while two of the three elementary schools would have enrollments of 420-470 students, with the third accommodating about 340-370 students. A two-secondary model would result in approximately 800 and 900 students at JL Jackson and Salmon Arm Secondary, respectively, with most urban elementary schools serving around 300-325 students. At which grade levels (K-7 or 8-12) would larger school sizes be more feasible?
- What financial commitment is the Board prepared to make?

The following information provides a cost analysis of a two-secondary school model.

Two Secondary Model

School	Renovation/Addition	Local Capital Cost	Annual Facility Grant Funding	School Enhancement Program
<i>Shuswap Middle</i>	Playground Equipment	195K		
<i>JL Jackson</i>	Two new portables	700K		
	Relocation of two portables	100K		
	Portable Bathroom Pod		150K	
	Gym Bleachers		350K	
	Gym Lights		100K	
	Change Room Reno		250K	
	Bathroom Reno			300K
<i>Salmon Arm Secondary</i>	Four new portables	1.4M		
	Relocation of two portables	100K		
	Portable Bathroom Pod	150K		
<i>** Additional Classroom Renovations</i>			20K-40K/classroom	
<i>Projected Cost</i>		<i>2.65M</i>	<i>850K</i>	<i>300K</i>

** The assumptions made are consistent for both models:

- Cost of new portable = 350K
- Cost of relocating portables = \$50/portable
- Any spaces which can be repurposed into classrooms eliminates the need for a portable and results in a savings of 350K.

*The 195K cost for a new playground will likely come from the Ministry's Playground Equipment Program.

The following information provides a cost analysis of the three-secondary school model.

School	Renovation/Addition	Local Capital Cost	Annual Facility Grant Funding	SEP
Hillcrest Elementary	Two new portables	700K		
	Playground	195K		
South Broadview Elementary	Four new portables	1.4 M		
	Six portables relocated	300K		
JL Jackson	Gym Bleachers		350K	
	Gym Lights		100K	
	Change Room Reno		250K	
	Bathroom Reno			300K
** Renovation of Internal Spaces			20K – 40K/ space	
Projected Cost		2.595M	700K	300K

*The 195K cost for a new playground will likely come from the Ministry's Playground Equipment Program.

Both options include a commitment to upgrading and refreshing spaces at JL Jackson. The school is structurally in very good condition, and by utilizing Annual Facility Grant (AFG) funding, there is an opportunity to make significant enhancements to improve the school's aesthetics.

It is important to note that if the Ministry approves a modular expansion project, it will eliminate the need for portable classrooms. Both the two- and three-secondary school models involve comparable transition costs.

Given the popularity of French Immersion as a program of choice, considerable thought has been given to where the program will be housed and whether it will operate within a single- or dual-track school. The following outlines the benefits and challenges of each model for consideration.

Single Track French Immersion	Dual Track French Immersion
Benefits: - Efficiency with staffing, resources, and support - According to research, there is a higher language acquisition in single track schools (announcements, intramurals, library, music, concerts, etc. are all in French) - Greater opportunity for students to use French within the entire school setting - French Immersion parents would likely understand the benefit of moving Early French Immersion (EFI) from Bastion if it was going to a single-track school	Benefits: - Improves intercultural awareness and exposure to diversity - Provides the opportunity to learn and teach in two languages - Non-immersion students are exposed to two languages - If a student leaves Early French Immersion, it doesn't require them to change schools - Allows students to attend school in some cases with their neighborhood friends who might be in a different program

Challenges: • Can promote a narrative around “elite” programming • Certain teaching positions are more difficult to recruit bilingual teachers for • Difficult to predict from year to year how many new students will enter the program and how many might leave it as students transition to secondary school • May result in families having children in more than one elementary school, however, it is a “program of choice” • If students leave the early French Immersion program, it will result in a change in school • It’s a healthy balance for English and French teachers to be aware what is going on in the workday of their colleagues	Challenges: • More challenging for principals/staff in dual track schools to maintain a culture which demonstrates the value and importance of immersion • More challenging and complex to lead because of the competing demands • More difficult to ensure that students speak French outside the classroom • Resource allocation is more challenging • At times, French Immersion and Non-French Immersion parents can find themselves at odds
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While no decisions have yet been made regarding a transition plan for Salmon Arm's urban and rural feeder schools, it remains a priority. Once the Board makes its decision, a comprehensive communication plan will be shared with principals, vice-principals, school staff, Rights Holders, school PACs, families and stakeholders, local Teachers’ Association executives, CUPE executives, and the broader community.

To date, there have been two meetings with school PACs. Staff from several schools have opted to wait until a formal transition plan is in place to meet, with Shuswap Middle School being the only school to request an early meeting. Communication with PACs thus far has focused on preparing them for potential changes and explaining why adjustments to schools, choice programs, and catchment areas may be necessary.

Once the transition plan is formalized by senior leadership and school leaders, the Superintendent will visit all staff at each of the Salmon Arm urban and rural feeder schools to discuss the plan's implications. Given the site-specific nature of the transition, scheduled meetings will be held with each school community to share the finalized plan. These sessions will be carefully sequenced to address concerns regarding timing.

To illustrate the complexity of transitioning to a two- or three-secondary school model, several draft options will be presented as examples only.

Two Secondary Transition Plan (3-year gradual transition)

JL Jackson Secondary	Salmon Arm Secondary
2025-26 Grade 9 to 11 • Grade 9’s will be assigned to JLJ from SMS and rural feeders based on a “family of schools” model • A cohort of grade 9’s from 2024-25 who are now grade 10’s at JLJ will stay back based on a “family of schools” model • A cohort of grade 10’s from 2024-25 who will be grade 11’s will stay back based on a “family of schools” model	2025-26 Grade 9 to 12 • Grade 9’s will be assigned to SAS from SMS and rural feeders based on a “family of schools” model • A cohort of grade 9’s from 2024-25 who would normally be grade 10’s at JLJ will stay transition to SAS base on a “family of schools” model • Only a portion of students who were in grade 10 at JLJ during 2024-25 will transition to SAS to become grade 11’s based on a “family of schools” model

	<i>ALL grade 11 students from 2024-25 who attended SAS will remain at SAS to be the final “single” graduating class.</i>
2026-27 Grade 9 to 12 - All students from 2025-26 will move up a grade - Incoming grade 9 students from SMS and rural feeder schools will be based on a “family of schools” model	2026-27 Grade 9 to 12 - All students from 2025-26 will move up a grade - Incoming grade 9 students from SMS and rural feeder schools will be based on a “family of schools” model
2027-28 (first year being a grade 8 to 12 school) Grade 8 to 12 Incoming grade 8 students from SMS and rural feeder schools will be based on a “family of schools” model	2027-28 (first year of being a grade 8 to 12 school) Grade 8 to 12 Incoming grade 8 students from SMS and rural feeder schools will be based on a “family of schools” model

The coordinated plan for the urban primary/elementary schools could look as follows, keeping in mind these are for illustrative purposes only.

Bastion	Hillcrest	South Broadview	Shuswap Middle
2025-26 remain K – 5 with no catchment change	2025-26 remain K – 5 with no catchment change	2025-26 remain K – 5 with no catchment change	2025-26 remain 6 – 8 (no change)
2026-27 First year of K – 6 English with Early French Immersion K - 5	2026-27 First year of K-6 (retaining grade 5 from previous year)	2026-27 First year of K-6 (retaining grade 5 from previous year)	2026-27 - English 7, 8 - Early and Late FI 6, 7 - Grade 8 FI
2027-28 - K-7 English - LFI 6, 7	2027-28 K-7 English	2027-28 EFI K-7 (Single Track) results in gr.6 EFI from 2026-27 transitioning back from SMS	2027-28 - English K-7 - StrongStart would move over from SBR
<i>*In 2027-28 a transition plan like this would see all French Immersion students and staff from Bastion move over to South Broadview while South Broadview students would move to SMS</i> <i>*New catchment areas will impact students moving from Hillcrest to SMS</i> <i>* SMS would become the new “overflow” school for urban Salmon Arm</i> <i>North Canoe, Salmon Arm West, and Sorrento could become K-6 in 2026-27 along with the urban Salmon Arm Schools</i> <i>Ranchero, Silver Creek, South Canoe, Carlin, North Shuswap could become K-7 in 2027-28</i>			

Three Secondary Transition Plan (2-year transition)

Shuswap	JL Jackson	Salmon Arm Secondary
2025-26 Grade 7 to 11 based on a “family of schools” model	2025-26 Grade 7 to 11 based on a “family of schools” model	2025-26 Grade 7 to 12 based on a “family of schools” model. All Grade 11 students from 2024-25 will be the last single graduating class
2026-27 Grade 8 to 12 based on a “family of schools” model	2026-27 Grade 8 to 12 based on a “family of schools” model	2026-27 Grade 8 to 12 based on a “family of schools” model

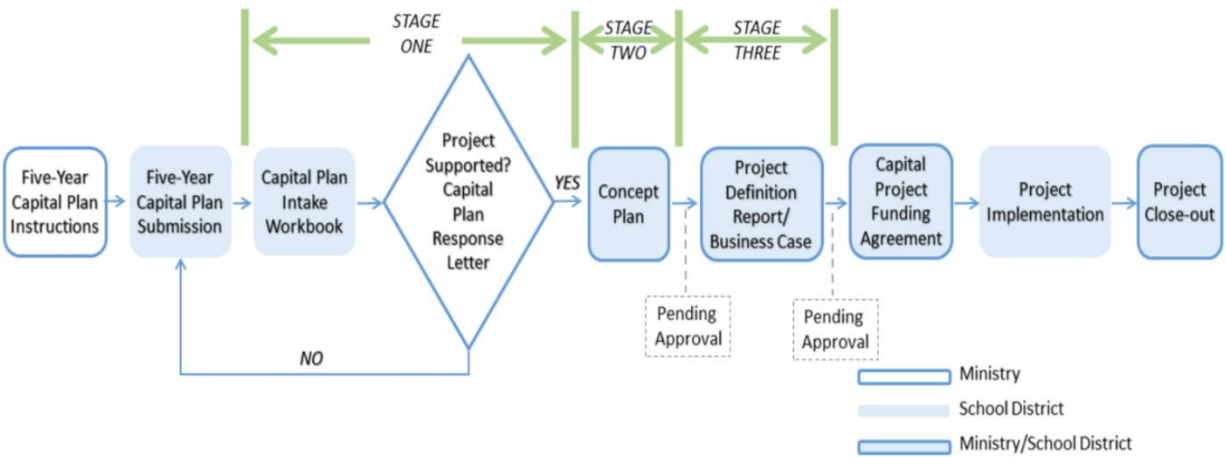
The coordinated plan for the urban primary/elementary schools could look as follows, keeping in mind these are for illustrative purposes only.

Elementary/Primary Student Experience – Three Secondary Model

Bastion	Hillcrest	South Broadview	Salmon Arm West/North Canoe	Ranchero/Silver Creek/South Canoe/Carlin/North Shuswap	Sorrento
2025-26 - K-7 dual track - English K to 6 - LFI Grade 6/7	2025-26 - K to 6 - Revised catchment **modulars or portables required (enrolment ~ 385)	2025-26 - K to 6 dual track - English K to 6 - EFL K to 6 **modulars or portables required (enrolment ~ 400)	2025-26 - K to 6 - Revised catchment	2025-26 - K to 8 - CAR with revised catchment	2025-26 - K to 6 (retain gr. 5 from 2024-25) - Revised catchment
2026-27 - K to 7 dual track - English K to 7 - LFI gr. 6/7	2026-27 K to 7 ** Enrollment would be ~ 425 - 435	2026-27 - K to 7 dual track - K to 7 EFL/Eng ** Enrollment would be ~ 460 - 470	2026-27 K to 7	2026-27 K to 7	2026-27 K to 7

Some community members continue to question whether Salmon Arm might receive a new downtown elementary school. The following diagram outlines the process a district follows when submitting a request for a new school within a five-year capital plan.

Figure 1-2 illustrates the process for three-stage process:



The Board of Education has requested a downtown elementary school for several years; however, each time the request is declined, leaving us in stage one of the process. Given enrollment pressures in regions such as the Lower Mainland, Kelowna, and Vancouver Island, the chances of approval for a new school remain low. It is unclear how significant and sustained overcapacity at our schools would need to be for our capital plan submission to be prioritized. Therefore, the decision to adopt a two- or three-secondary model should likely proceed independently of the unlikely prospect of a new school. A more probable outcome is that the district may receive a modular expansion to offset the need for portables.

Summary

The decision before the Board is a difficult one, and while there is no perfect solution, one thing is clear: both options will ensure that students from both urban and rural Salmon Arm feeder schools are provided with a school experience rooted in sound educational and developmental principles. Whether through two or three secondary schools, these options will minimize the number of school transitions for students, allowing them more time with teachers. This will not only benefit their academic growth but also strengthen their connections to caring adults, foster a stronger sense of belonging, and enhance their engagement with the school community.

The Board's decision must strike a delicate balance, ensuring equity for both elementary and secondary students attending schools in Salmon Arm. It is important to consider the developmental needs of students, their ability to navigate change, and the vision for the type of school experience we want to provide. This will be the most significant decision the current Board makes during its term.

The financial investment required to implement this reconfiguration will be money well spent. It will create an enriched educational experience and learning environment for students attending Salmon Arm schools both now and in the future. The District's Mission—"to empower students to become confident, curious, and caring individuals who thrive in their learning, relationships, and community"—aligns with this vision. By offering more choices for achieving a Dogwood Diploma through expanded electives and course offerings, we can further empower students. Students thrive when they feel welcomed, respected, safe, and supported.

Ensuring schools provide spaces where students can regulate, maintain their dignity, and be supported by caring adults is essential for fostering success. Additionally, integrating students of varying abilities into the same classrooms not only nurtures empathy but also creates a cohesive learning environment where all students can thrive together.

Based on the evidence gathered, the data collected, and feedback from both staff and the community, the senior leadership team agrees that the two-secondary model best aligns with our district's foundational statements and offers all students the most optimal school experience.

Recommendation

“That the Board of Education approve a two secondary school model within the community of Salmon Arm as presented.”

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Kriger
Superintendent