

## **Vancouver school board votes not to sell school land**

**Vancouver Board of Education trustees passed a motion not to sell school land despite a June 2015 E&Y report suggesting sales could net \$750 million.**



Jonathan Hayward/The Canadian Press

<http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2015/10/14/vancouver-school-board-votes-not-to-sell-school-land.html>

Chairs are seen on top of desks in a physics lab at McGee Secondary school in Vancouver, B.C. Friday, Sept. 5, 2014.

By: [Emily Jackson](#) Metro Published on **Tue Oct 13 2015**

**The cash-strapped Vancouver school board has officially rejected a suggestion to sell off local schools for a one-time, multi-million-dollar cash influx.**

Green Party trustee Janet Fraser's motion asking the board to commit to not selling school properties in order to preserve them for future use passed on Tuesday night. Vision Vancouver trustees voted in support and Non-Partisan Association trustees voted against the motion.

A June 2015 Ernst & Young report reviewing the board's budget for the B.C. Ministry of Education recommended closing 19 schools and selling the land for an estimated \$750-million cash influx and annual cost savings of \$37 million.

But trustees ultimately decided it would be shortsighted to sell off the land to plug holes in the budget, Vision Vancouver trustee Patti Bacchus said Wednesday.

"We're a growing city, we need these spaces for public use," Bacchus said. "If we lose some of these sites it would be hard to get them back."

The board's decision leaves room to lease underutilized schools or swap land parcels should the need for schools shift to different parts of the city. Fraser's motion does not preclude school closures, but it protects the land itself.

Vision Vancouver proposed a moratorium on school closures in January, but the motion failed. Vision lost control of the board in the 2014 election.

The school board is required to balance its budget. This has meant cuts in recent year to make up for operating shortfalls of more than 60 million over the last decade, Bacchus said.

Bacchus is lobbying the province to increase its budget in the spring so it doesn't have to make cuts that impact classrooms.