

[Previous Story](#)

[Next Story](#)

Article rank | 21 Aug 2014 | The Vancouver Sun

MIKE HAGER AND TRACY SHERLOCK mhager@postmedia.com Follow me: @MikePHager | VANCOUVER SUN

Seismic upgrades causing a rift

Education ministry robs parents of input, VSB charges

B. C.'s Education Ministry has given the Vancouver School Board until the end of next week to approve a proposal for a jointly run office to oversee seismic upgrades of aging schools.

Five Vancouver school upgrades are in advanced planning or being built and another 23 schools are awaiting upgrades, "some of which have been on the books since 2004," Education Minister Peter Fassbender told a news conference Wednesday.

The deadline, makeup and rules for the proposed office blindsided VSB chairwoman Patti Bacchus, who had lobbied for such an office in her board's October 2012 capital plan. She said the board submitted a proposal for an office in the spring, but heard nothing until one hour before the minister's news conference.

But Bacchus said the way the proposed office is structured will take decision-making away from her board, making it more difficult to take parent and community views into account when renovating or rebuilding a school, Bacchus said.

"They don't want us requesting projects that they think there is a way to do cheaper. They now want the very cheapest option, no matter what," Bacchus said. "They used to say if an upgrade will cost more than 70 per cent of a new school, go ahead and build a new school. Now they're saying it has to be 100 per cent."

Fassbender said if the VSB doesn't approve the plan, then "the government will have to look at what we do with the dollars we have available for seismic upgrades."

"We have been talking about it for two years. We have not seen the appropriate response to the Vancouver School Board to this date," Fassbender said. "This is not the government telling Vancouver what to do, it's saying 'let's do it together.'"

This article was shared by a user of PressReader - an online source of publications from around the world. PressReader contains copyrighted material, trademarks and other proprietary information. Receipt of this article should not be interpreted as grant of any licenses express or implied, to the intellectual property of PressReader or publishers of publications presented. PressReader - Connecting People Through News PressReader, 200-13111 Vanier Place, Richmond BC V6V 2J1, Canada Phone: +1 604 278 4604 © 2003-2014 NewspaperDirect Inc. dba PressReader. All rights reserved. Terms of Use: http://www.pressdisplay.com/pressdisplay/showlink.aspx?pageid=ins_terms Privacy Policy: http://www.pressdisplay.com/pressdisplay/showlink.aspx?pageid=ins_privacy

[Previous Story](#)

[Next Story](#)

Building new schools is cheaper than seismic upgrades

SAL 9:57 p.m. PDT August 23, 2014



Peter Courtney announced seismic upgrades costing millions of dollars for an undetermined number of the more than 1,000 schools found to have high risks of collapse during a major earthquake.

Again, Peter seems to be detached from reality.

Spending millions (aka billions) on aging buildings has a likelihood of producing a result for taxpayers somewhat equivalent to their chances of winning the lottery. Slim or none.

We should use limited tax resources to enhance current educational programs. This has an immediate payback for taxpayers, parents and students.

It would make more sense and be less costly to replace aging buildings as they become obsolete with new, earthquake-resistant buildings.

Just another bad idea, Peter.

James D. Vick

Salem

Read or Share this story: <http://stjr.nl/1p45KYe>