
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2018EDUC0056-001886
Sept. 28, 2018

Ministry of Education

Wolfe, Cavell students can look forward to learning in safer schools

VANCOUVER – Seismic upgrades at General Wolfe and Edith Cavell elementary schools will bring peace of mind to thousands of Vancouver families for years to come.

“Our government is taking action to ensure families with children at both of these schools can have the comfort of knowing that students will be safe in the event of a large earthquake,” said Rob Fleming, Minister of Education. “We will continue working for B.C. families by accelerating the Seismic Mitigation Program to ensure every student can attend a seismically safe school.”

Both Cavell and Wolfe require seismic upgrades, and the Government of B.C. is fully funding the cost of the work to keep their students safer – a combined value of \$35.8 million. Construction on both schools is expected to begin in spring 2020 and be ready for students in fall 2021. The heritage structures of both facilities will remain intact.

“On behalf of the board, we are delighted with today's announcement for the Edith Cavell and General Wolfe elementary schools,” said Janet Fraser, chair, Vancouver Board of Education. “Not only will the upgrades at both schools make students and staff safer in the event of an earthquake, our intent is to provide an even more welcoming environment for learning.”

Cavell Elementary, in Vancouver's South Cambie neighbourhood, was built in 1920 and is at high risk of sustaining damage in the event of a significant earthquake. The seismic upgrades will cost \$15.6 million. During construction, students are scheduled to attend MacCorkindale and Champlain Heights elementary schools.

General Wolfe Elementary's entire school will be seismically upgraded at a cost of \$20.2 million. The school was built between 1910 and 1912 in the Riley Park-Little Mountain neighbourhood and is also rated as a high seismic risk. During construction, students are scheduled to attend the South Hill Education Centre swing space.

“Today's announcement is really about providing students and staff with the opportunity to learn, grow and experience an amazing education in an inspiring learning environment,” said Suzanne Hoffman, superintendent, Vancouver School District. “The school communities – students, parents and school staff – will have opportunities to meet with district and project staff in the coming months to share their input about how, together, we can achieve that reality.”

Since September 2017, the Province has approved a total of \$744 million in capital projects, including \$387 million for seismic upgrades or replacements. This also includes more than \$186 million to replace or upgrade six high-risk schools in Vancouver – Sir Matthew Begbie, David Lloyd George, General Wolfe and Edith Cavell elementary schools, and Eric Hamber Secondary school.

Government is committed to clearing the backlog of seismic projects and is working with school districts and local governments to reduce the time it takes to plan and upgrade or replace a school.

The Province has funded a Vancouver capital project team dedicated to addressing the backlog of seismic projects in Vancouver and accelerating upgrades at high-risk schools throughout the district.

Quick Facts:

- 178 of the 347 high-risk schools in the Ministry of Education’s Seismic Mitigation Program have been upgraded or replaced, with 14 schools under construction and 15 schools proceeding to construction.
- Budget 2018 provides a record \$2 billion in school capital projects over the next three years, including \$541 million for seismic upgrades and replacements at schools throughout B.C.
- Currently, 25 of the 90 high-risk schools in Vancouver have had their upgrades completed, with 12 schools under construction or proceeding to construction.
- To accelerate projects in school districts with large and complex capital programs, government continues to support capital project teams in Vancouver, Surrey and Richmond.

Learn More:

For more information about the Ministry of Education’s Seismic Mitigation Program, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/capital/seismic-mitigation>

For more information about the Ministry of Education’s Capital Management Plan, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/capital>

Contacts:

Government Communications and Public
Engagement
Ministry of Education
250 356-5963

Patricia MacNeil
Director of Communications
Vancouver School Board
604-713-5213

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect