

For Immediate Release

PARENTS FEAR FOR CHILDREN'S SAFETY AT STRATHCONA ELEMENTARY

Seismic Upgrades To BC's No. 1 High Risk School Remain On Hold For 9 Years

Vancouver, BC, October 24, 2013 | The BC Government first approved Strathcona Elementary to receive upgrades in 2004. In 2005, the school was put at the top of the priority list, deemed to be the highest risk school in the province. Nine years later, having had literally thousands of children, parents, community members, faculty and staff pass through the doors, the wait continues.

Learning of the latest obstacle introduced by the Ministries of Education and Finance, Vancouver Board of Education Chair Patti Bacchus stated, "We were very disappointed to hear that the Treasury Board has requested yet another engineering report be completed prior to approval".

The last value analysis in May, 2013 reported that no further cuts could be made to the project budget.

Minister of Finance, Mike de Jong and Minister of Education, Peter Fassbender have yet to respond to the community's concerns regarding a request for yet another cost analysis. Strathcona parents have watched schools in other ridings receive approvals, funding and seismic upgrading completions while their children continue to be forced to learn in an unsafe environment. Now, they are rallying together with other community members to bring this issue into the public eye.

As a follow up to the successful Twitter campaign, #9yearsawaiting, Strathconaseismic.org launches today. The website is designed to provide parents with vital information regarding Strathcona's seismic upgrading approval process, and to encourage them to seek out the answers to the pressing question why isn't this government prioritizing these upgrades when children are sitting for up to 8 hours a day in the most dangerous school in BC?

In her October 24th, letter to Minister Fassbender, MLA Jenny Kwan reminds him that "the students, staff and families of Strathcona want to know when the government of British Columbia will do its part and end the delays and start construction of these essential seismic upgrades". Kwan goes on to state that in April Fassbender's predecessor had indicated that the Ministry of Education was waiting on a Value Analysis before proceeding on the project. When Kwan again raised the issue with Fassbender this past July in the Legislature, he responded that the Value Analysis was complete and that final approval would be given within weeks. Three months later, the seismic upgrade process remains stalled.

On October 17, all students of Strathcona Elementary participated in the [Great British Columbia Shake Out](#), practicing earthquake response and safety. How do we tell the children of Strathcona Elementary that there's nothing they can do when their school crumbles around them?

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