



Coast Mountains Board of Education School District 82

FACILITIES PLAN
2011 – 2021
Executive Summary

Report by Cascade Facilities Management Consultants Ltd

LONG RANGE FACILITIES PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES-1 The Ministry of Education 2009/10 Capital Plan Instructions require Boards of Education to develop and maintain a comprehensive School District Facilities Plan (SDFP). These plans should support and guide the school district's facilities usage and requirements for the next ten years.

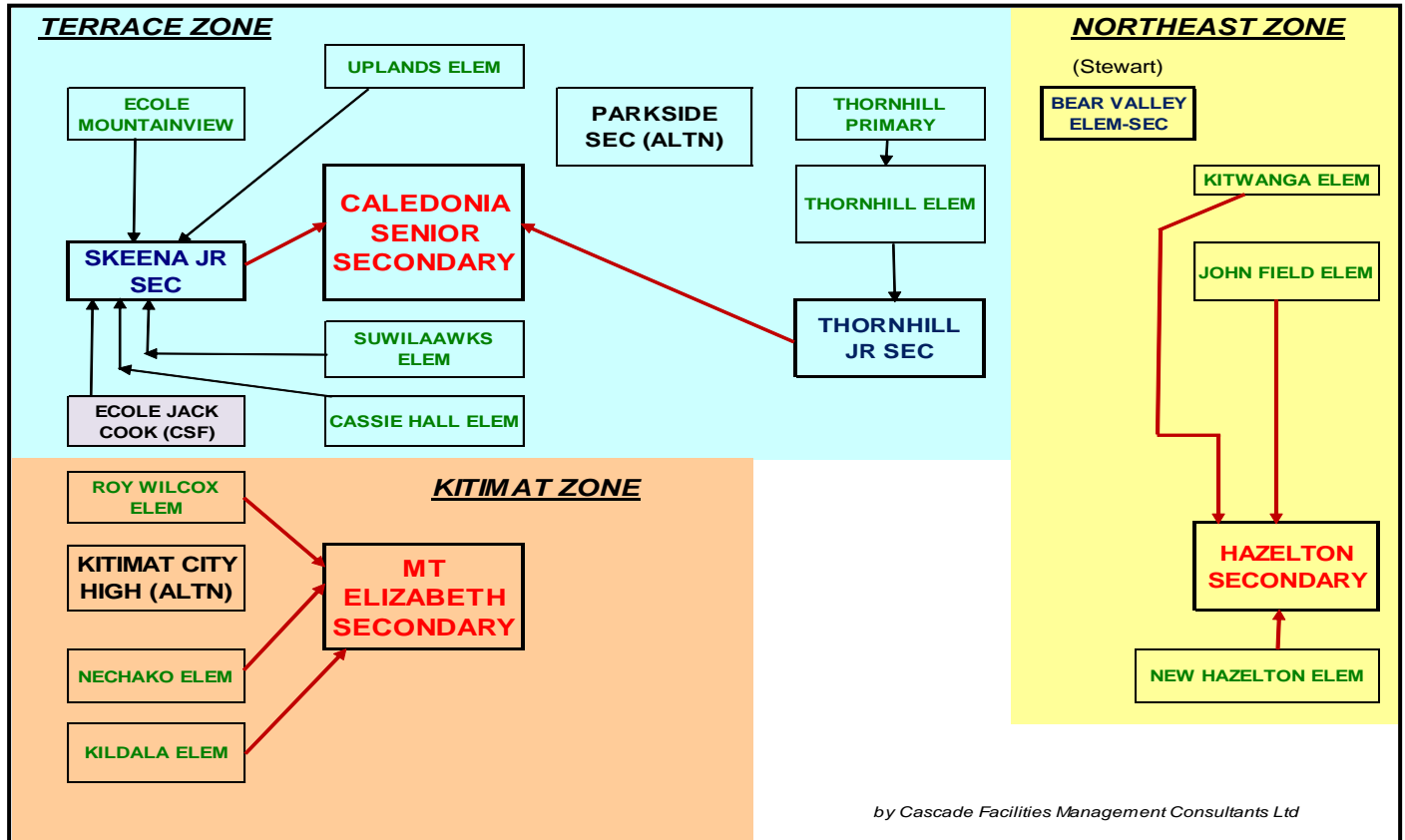
ES-2 For the purposes of planning, it is recommended that the school district be organized into *three zones*: **Terrace**, **Kitimat**, and **Northeast**. This varies from the political divisions and representation within the board of school trustees, but from the point of view of facilities management, is the most logical. Terrace Zone includes the Thornhill area. Northeast Zone includes all the communities east on Highway 16 and Highway 37: Cedarvale, Kitwanga, the Hazeltons, and Stewart.

ES-3 In 2010/2011 Coast Mountains School District was operating and maintaining the following schools and other facilities:

- **ELEMENTARY –**
 - **Terrace Zone:**
 - Ecole Mountainview (K-7);
 - Uplands Elementary (K-7);
 - Suwilaawks Elementary (K-7);
 - Cassie Hall Elementary (K-7);
 - Thornhill Primary (K-3);
 - Thornhill Elementary (4-7);
 - **Kitimat Zone:**
 - Roy Wilcox Elementary (K-7) (now closed since 1 July 2011);
 - Nechako Elementary (K-7);
 - Kildala Elementary (K-7);
 - **Northeast Zone:**
 - Kitwanga Elementary (K-7);
 - John Field Elementary (K-7);
 - New Hazelton Elementary (K-7).
- **ELEMENTARY – SECONDARY -**
 - **Northeast Zone:**
 - Bear Valley Elementary-Secondary (K-12);
- **SECONDARY –**
 - **Terrace Zone:**
 - Skeena Junior Secondary (8-10);
 - Thornhill Junior Secondary (8-10);
 - Caledonia Senior Secondary (11-12);
 - Parkside Secondary (Alternate);

- **Kitimat Zone:**
 - Mount Elizabeth Secondary (8-12);
 - Kitimat City High (Alternate);
 - **Northeast Zone:**
 - Hazelton Secondary (8-12) and Stekyodan (Alternate);
- **OTHER SERVICES –**
- **Terrace Zone:**
 - North Coast Distance Education;
 - PACES (Learning Centre);
 - First Nations Education Centre;
 - School Board Office;
 - School District Maintenance Department;
 - **Kitimat Zone:**
 - School District Maintenance Annex.
 - **Northeast Zone:**
 - Student Support Services.

ES-4 The June 2011 school organization and the flow of students from elementary to secondary is shown in the following Chart. The proposed changes to school organization which are planned to occur in 2012 are discussed later in the report.



ES-5 School Conditions. Table 2.6 in the report shows the Age, Nominal Capacity, Building Area, and Facility Condition based on the 2010 CAMS facility condition index by VFA. The facilities are in need of improvement. A combination of capital projects and Annual Facilities Grant projects has been identified to the Ministry, and some Project Identification Reports (PIRs) have been prepared. Thirteen projects were submitted to the Ministry last year (Paragraph 2.7 of the report).

ES-6 Surplus Property. The school district has had to deal with declining enrolment and the resulting budget cuts over the past decade. As a result, the board has courageously made tough decisions to close a number of schools. The depressed state of the economy in northern BC has resulted in limited opportunities to financially benefit from sale of surplus properties. Figure 2.7 in the report provides the list of current surplus buildings.

ES-7 Demographics. The Facilities Plan analyzes the demographics of the school district in considerable detail in Section 3. Although fertility rates are starting to rise again, the aging of the population and limited in-migration of families to the area will result in continuing population decline in the school aged group. Primary school grades will start to recover in mid-decade, but not enough to offset the continuing enrolment decline in higher grades until beyond the ten year timeframe.

ES-8 Enrolment Projection. The work in this strategic study indicates a need to replace both the School District and the Ministry of Education enrolment projections from September 2010 (shown in Figure 4.2 in the report). The recommended new Enrolment Projection is presented in Section 5.9 of the report.

ES-9 Capacity Utilization. The Ministry of Education manages province-wide school infrastructure needs by examining the percentage of occupancy compared to building capacity. The lower the capacity utilization, the less efficiently a district is using its facilities. It is maintaining, heating, and cleaning unoccupied space. In September 2010, SD 82 reported its Capacity Utilization as Elementary 60.9%; Secondary 62.7%; and Total 61.8%. This is far below the Ministry target of 95%.

ES-10 Figures 4.4 and 4.5 in the report show the elementary and secondary capacity compared to current and future enrolment. It should be noted that the future enrolment columns in these charts are based upon the district's optimistic view of future projections as submitted in September 2010 to the Ministry.

ES-11 Grade Configuration. There is operating and organizational flexibility available to the district in considering adjusting the grade configuration between elementary and secondary. For pedagogical and organizational reasons, the district embarked on a study of the possibility of middle schools. This grade configuration change has now been approved for schools in the Terrace and Kitimat Zones. The proposed new grade structure will eliminate junior secondaries and replace them with middle schools. At the same time, this will facilitate

an adjustment to the grade levels in each school level and allow some rationalization of facilities.

ES-12 School Closures. The same study recognized the need to close additional space and supported the closing of Thornhill Junior Secondary, leaving only one middle school (formerly Skeena Junior Secondary) in the Terrace Zone. The creation of a middle school in the Kitimat Zone would be accomplished by having two schools (a middle and a secondary) co-located within the Mount Elizabeth Secondary facility. The plan also closes Roy Wilcox Elementary in Kitimat.

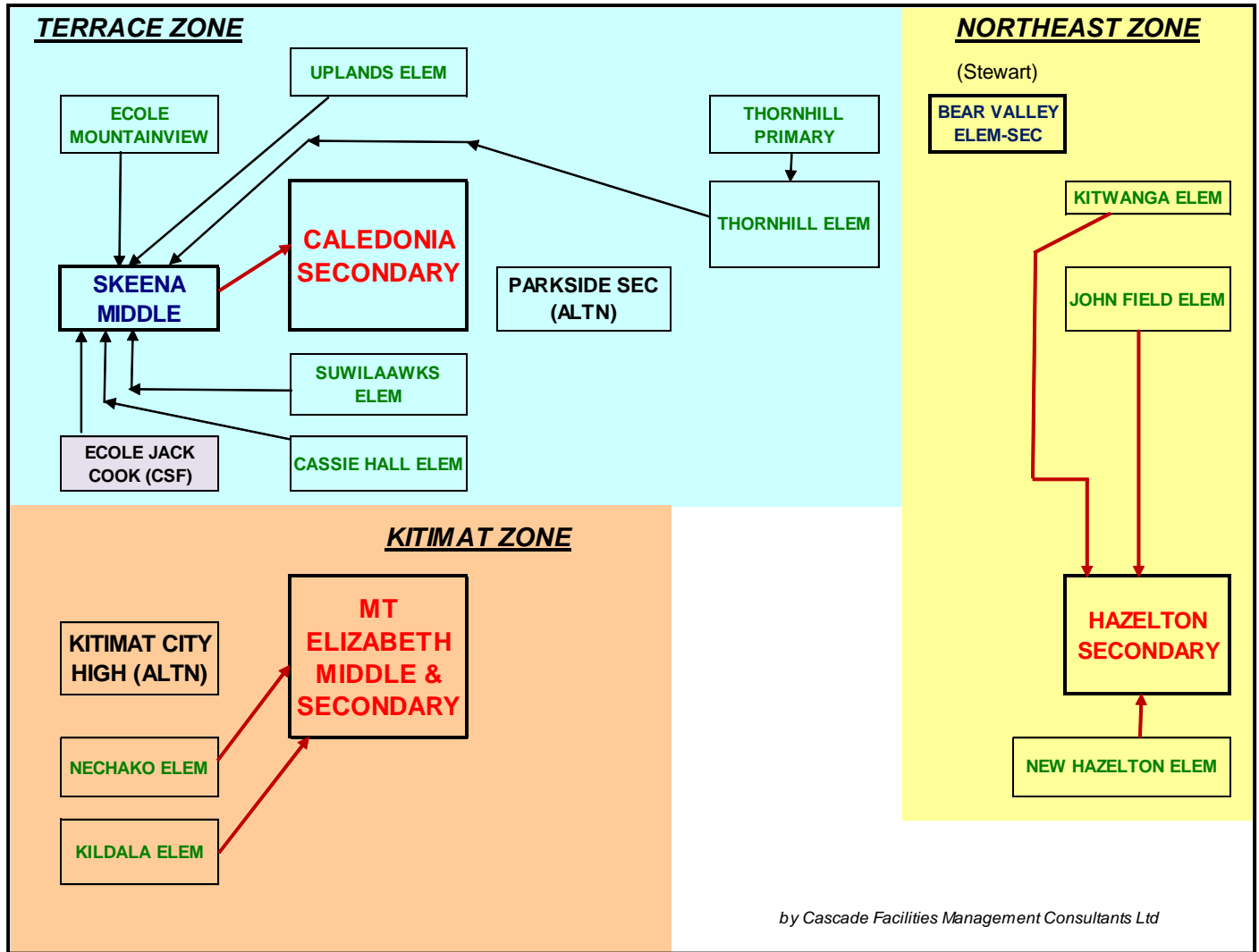
ES-13 The resulting grade structure proposed by the district for Terrace and Kitimat Zones in September 2012 is:

- Elementary K – 6 (currently K-7);
- Middle 7 – 9 (currently Junior Secondary 8 – 10); and
- Secondary 10 – 12 (currently only 11 – 12).

ES-14 The effect of this change upon enrolment populations in the schools will be significant:

- Elementary populations will go down by one-eighth (12.5%);
- Middle School populations will stay the same as the former Junior Secondaries, keeping three grades. However, with the merging of Skeena and Thornhill into one, Skeena Middle will gain the Thornhill population;
- Caledonia Secondary population will go from Grades 11 – 12 to 10 – 12, an increase of 50%. It is recommended that the increase be reflected as 40%; and
- Mount Elizabeth Secondary will go from Grades 8 – 12 to 7 – 12, an increase of 1/5 or 20%. It is recommended that the increase be reflected as 17%.

ES-15 This proposed new organization is planned to take place in September 2012 and would be as shown in this chart below (Figure 5.1 in the report):



Proposed Organization in September 2012

ES-16 The Facilities Plan offers a third version of the School District 82 enrolment projection, altering the district and Ministry projections to reflect the grade configuration change to take place in 2012, the planned closure of two more schools, and other factors discussed in Paragraph 5.9.1 in the report. The proposed new Enrolment Projection is provided in Figure 5.2 in the report.

ES-17 The planned grade structure reorganization and the closure of Roy Wilcox Elementary and Thornhill Junior Secondary, combined with the above long-range updated enrolment projection, yields new “Capacity versus Enrolment” charts (Figures 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 in the report). This visual representation captures the remaining surplus space in the district over the long term.

ES-18 Based upon observed population and enrolment trends and existing school capacity, there is no requirement during the ten year planning period to plan for additional new school accommodation. Instead, focus must be upon rationalizing and improving the existing school infrastructure. New schools or renovations will be needed as replacement of old facilities but not as additional new space.

ES-19 In spite of some hope for future enrolment growth at the primary grade level and the effect of government early education initiatives discussed in the report, there will be underutilized capacity for the long term in the Coast Mountains schools. This is a concern even after the planned additional closures of Roy Wilcox Elementary and Thornhill Junior Secondary. Over the next ten years the district will continue to be challenged by falling enrolment in schools. Within the three zones, the most obvious surplus capacity is located in the Kitimat Zone. With elementary schools in Terrace and Kitimat losing their Grade 7's to the middle schools, the excess capacity at the elementary level will be exacerbated.

ES-20 **Recommendations:** The recommendations below are detailed in the report in Section 7.5:

Recommendations Summary

7.5 a	Dispose of surplus property.
7.5 b	Verify enrolment projections annually.
7.5 c	Continue operating small schools in rural communities.
7.5 d	Combine dual projects in Capital Plan submission.
7.5 e	Consolidate within under-utilized schools and close off areas.
7.5 f	Remove old buildings and clean up vacant sites.
7.5 g	Consider closing Kildala or Nechako Elem within a few years.
7.5 h	Consider consolidating Thornhill Primary and Elementary into one.

ES-21 The highest priority facilities project was identified in 2010 as the consolidation and renovation of Mount Elizabeth Secondary. A Project Identification Report (PIR) was submitted by the district to the Ministry. This plan supports the need for this project and recommends continued pressure on MOE to gain approval. The completion of this project will create a smaller but more functional and effective secondary school for Kitimat Zone.

ES-22 In order for the Ministry of Education to give priority to the district's needs, well-written and detailed up-to-date **Project Identification Reports** (PIRs) must be submitted for the top priority projects. For those top projects lacking up-to-date PIRs, action should be taken to have these documents prepared and submitted.

ES-23 A two-stage implementation strategy is recommended:

1. Because of the long lead time for capital projects, it is important to be ready to submit the following to the Ministry of Education as soon as the Ministry calls for the next capital submission:
 - o This School District Facility Plan 2011-2021;
 - o The next Annual Capital Plan Submission; and
 - o Project Identification Reports (PIR's) for the top major capital projects.

2. There is no need for *immediate* action on further school closures (beyond the currently planned closure of Thornhill Jr Sec and Roy Wilcox Elementary). Analysis of the local economy and in-migration to Terrace and Kitimat, updated enrolment trends, and the impact of various government initiatives affecting school populations should be undertaken in **2013**. The 2011 Canada Census data should have been released and available at that time. Following careful analysis of this new data combined with two years of Baragar Demographics data, the predicted need for additional school closures should be verified.
