SALMON ARM SCHOOL RECONFIGURATION UPDATE

Regular Board Meeting

November 17, 2026

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SD83

Key Board Decisions

Date	Decision	Significance
June 18, 2024	K–7/8–12 configuration selected	Established the educational structure for Salmon Arm urban and rural feeder schools.
November 19, 2024	Two-secondary-school model approved	Confirmed J.L. Jackson Secondary and Salmon Arm Secondary as the two Grade 8–12 schools.
January 21, 2025	Three-Year Transition Plan approved	Established a phased 2025–2028 implementation process for catchments, staffing, facilities, and grade movement.

Why two secondary schools?

Strongest overall educational and programming benefits, while protecting specialized elementary learning spaces.

An understood trade-off

Capacity pressure at either level was unavoidable. It does not change the educational rationale.

The Why of Reconfiguration

1. **More time to connect**
   Staff get to know students better and can support them more effectively.

2. **Fewer transitions**
   Fewer school changes reduce barriers, especially for priority learners.

3. **Continuity of services**
   Supports and services stay in place as students move through K–7/8–12.

4. **Educationally sound**
   The K–7/8–12 structure is educationally and developmentally sound.

Good for kids.

In year two of the three-year transition, we are already seeing the narrative change.

The 2027–28 space pressure is a challenge to manage, not a reason to change the rationale.

2027–28 Enrolment Outlook at SAS

918

students projected at Salmon Arm Secondary (SAS)

175

Grade 8 students added in the final transition year

4

additional portable classrooms required

Final phase of the transition

2027–28 completes the three-year move to the full K–7/8–12 configuration.

Work Completed at SAS

Year One | Ready for 2025–26

- Photography and Graphic Media Design lab created
- Career Centre moved to the library
- Wellness Centre moved to former counselling area
- New office and breakout space by the cafeteria
- Main office renovated for added workspaces
- Gym curtain divider and wall crash pads installed
- More picnic tables and benches, inside and out

Year Two | Ready for 2026–27

- Metal shop renovated for added teaching space
- Two new IAP/Learning Resource breakout rooms
- Two SD83 portables delivered and installed
- Classroom converted to a Yoga/Dance studio
- 40-foot storage container for PHE and athletics gear

Result: added instructional and support capacity, enabling or expanding Photography and Graphic Media Design, Yoga, Art, Learning Resource supports, and simultaneous PHE offerings.

What We Need for Fall 2027

Expected pressure points

- General classrooms for 918+ students (top pressure)
- Science, Fine Arts, PHE
- Learning Resource, Indigenous support
- Food services, hallways, common areas
- Staff work and prep spaces

Planned facility work

- Second art room
- Additional science lab
- Second music/drama space
- Signage and painting
- Washer and dryer for PHE and athletics
- More single-stall washrooms
- More cafeteria tables

Operational options under review

- Modular Grade 8 exploratories, term-based Grade 9 electives
- Some courses outside the timetable (e.g., Automotive, Choir)
- Co-teaching larger classes where possible (e.g. Musical Theatre)
- More Dance and Yoga in PHE
- Blended learning, early graduation, pathways

Exploring Grade 8 Programming

141

Grade 8–12 schools researched, plus visits to secondary schools in Vernon and Kamloops

Successful programs combine cohort identity, transition supports, exploratory electives, and dedicated adults.

A supported "school within a school" with full access to Grade 8–12 opportunities.

1. Dedicated **Grade 8 Core teachers**
2. **Core Linear:** Advisory, Math, English, Social Studies
3. **Semestered:** Science, Physical and Health Education
4. **Modular:** ADST, Fine Arts, Careers, Core French
5. **Cohort identity:** common location at SAS for grade 8's
6. **Transition Planning:** orientations, tours, events & activities
7. **Gradual path** to full secondary independence by Grade 9

An Opportunity to Look at School Differently?

Attendance
23%
of students miss 25% or more of the school year

Belonging
51%
feel they belong; 40% like school, 15% feel stressed or anxious

Hands-on learning
Rising
enrolment in curricular areas that rely on a hands-on approach

Leaving early
16%
of Grade 12s graduated early in 2025–26 (11–18% yearly since 2021–22)

Course load
51%
of Grade 12s took a full course load; 295 study blocks in Semester 2

Transferable learning
60–70%
feel school prepares them for the future; about one in three do not

What If We Did School Differently?

If we repurposed a wing of Shuswap Middle School (SMS), what could it become for all secondary students in the community?

1

The spark

Consultation raised access to specialized programs as a consistent concern:

- Woodshop
- Automotive Technology
- Culinary Arts

2

The idea

Choice-based academy-style programming using SMS's existing shops and fine arts rooms.

Open to all Salmon Arm grade 10-12 students.

3

Facility opportunity

The ADST / Fine Arts wing at SMS could be fully separated from the new French Immersion elementary school.

A Choice That Meets Students' Needs

PHASE 1
Shuswap Trades Academy

- Project-based, integrated learning
- Classroom instruction, shop-based learning, industry mentorship, career exploration, and authentic projects
- Semester-long program
- Possible partners: SD83 Careers Department, Okanagan College, Thompson Rivers University, employers, and trades organizations
- Connects learning to apprenticeship, employment, and post-secondary pathways

PHASE 2
Thrive Learning Centre

- Flexible, self-paced, hybrid learning for grades 10–12
  - Combining at-home learning with on-site instruction
  - Mentorship, project-based learning, and community experiences
  - Teacher advisory and individualized pathways
- Possible location for District Academies and District Career programs

Next Steps

In summary

The K–7/8–12 rationale remains sound.

SAS projects 918 students in 2027–28, needing four portables.

Choice-based SMS programs could provide additional opportunities.

Next steps
Work with Operations staff to assess feasibility and facility renovations at SAS/SMS.
Explore unique education programs and academies across the province.
Collaborate with education staff to finalize programming decisions.
Report back to the Board