



**A NEW SCHOOL
BUILDING FOR
SOUTHPOINTE
ACADEMY**

**THE CASE FOR
SUPPORT**

PREAMBLE

Southpointe Academy was created in the year 2000 in Tsawwassen. It was located in leased premises in a strip mall, though parents were promised a new school ‘in two years’. A large billboard was erected on the property known as the Southlands declaring, ‘Future Home of Southpointe Academy’.

By September 2003, no new building having been forthcoming, the school was housed in a motel conversion, a real-estate office conversion, and the original strip mall, all leased from the Century Group.

In August 2004, the non-profit Society that ran the school had the repayment of a large loan demanded immediately by the bank and the school faced closure with debts of \$1.75 million. Happily, a group of committed parents formed a new non-profit Society and obtained the rights to the school name. Their superhuman efforts, together with the commitment and loyalty of the school’s staff, kept the school alive.

By August 2005, the debt had been eliminated and the school was on a sound financial footing. It has never been in debt since that time, nor has it ever used its credit line.

Since September 2005, the school has grown in size, performance and stature: its graduates grace the halls of many universities, (including The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, The University of Victoria, McGill University, The University of Toronto, The University of Western Ontario, The University of Calgary, Queen’s University, The University of Waterloo, Trinity Western University, Dalhousie University, Duke University, The University of Washington, Thomson Rivers University, Emily Carr University, The University of Northern British Columbia, Bond University, Mount Allison University, and Harvard University); there are athletic championship banners adorning the hallways; music certificates from national band championships have their honoured place in the band room; the students are renowned for their great support of such charitable causes as the Terry Fox Foundation, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Breast Cancer Foundation, Delta Assist and Covenant House; our global education program enables our students to experience other countries –China, France, Spain, New Zealand –both by visiting them and receiving guests from them, while our Project Discover program develops self-reliance, decision-making, leadership and respect for our natural environment. Last year, our students achieved no less than three perfect scores on the SAT tests, while 100% of our candidates scored perfect 5’s in Advanced Placement Chemistry. In addition, our examination averages on the mandatory Provincial examinations exceeded the provincial averages by 16% (Math10), 16% (Science 10), 12% (English 10), 10% (Socials 11) and 10% (English 12). We also exceeded the independent school averages in all subjects.

THE NEED

Some may wonder why, with such an impressive record of success, we need to build a new school. There are many reasons:

Ownership

We currently own neither land nor buildings. This fact alone makes our need urgent, for what we do not own, we cannot control. We cannot know when our landlord will need the site we currently occupy for other purposes. Our future growth and development will require significant support and investment, but this will not be forthcoming if what is grown and developed does not belong to us. Wise independent schools understand that their future capital needs will be met by those persons and families who feel gratitude for what their school gave them; they also understand that donors will wish whatever they fund to have longevity, to give them a legacy – something that cannot be guaranteed in leased premises. Ownership is, therefore, vital for the guaranteed continued existence of our school. Imagine where we might be if the \$5 million+ spent on rent were instead part of our equity.

Suitability for Purpose

In our current facilities, we manage. We cannot claim, however, that they approach the ideal. Though the conversion from motel to school was remarkably well-conceived and accomplished, a conversion it clearly is. We have to make concessions to our facilities in so many ways: timetabling science with a single laboratory, for example, or P.E. in a single, distant gymnasium, Art in a small, remote room and Band well away from our centre. We have difficult traffic circulation as cars and buses mingle with young pedestrians. Our crowded recess conditions lead to aggravation, scrapes and bruises; we walk beside and cross busy roads to reach remote classes; we suffer from an absence of on-campus meeting spaces, inadequate space for drama and other ‘active’ pursuits; insufficient off-street parking; no playing fields –the list goes on. The classrooms are, in the main, good and bright and spacious, though the temperature is hard to control.

The MYP students are not so fortunate, however, for their classrooms are only marginally satisfactory in size, light etc. All this is understandable, inevitable even, in a conversion –but it is not ideal.

We need a new, purpose-built school to provide the environment for optimal learning. We need natural light and we need constant temperature, both factors that have been proved in many studies to improve learning; we need more laboratories; we need a theatre; we need activity space; we need our own gymnasium; we need cohesion –togetherness ; we need meeting spaces. We need room to ‘be’.

We need a school built for purpose.

Pride

The psychological effect of a new school should not be under-estimated. Schools visit each other –for games, conferences, professional development and the like; both students and teachers see the facilities and conditions that other schools enjoy and cannot but be envious. It is hard for us to feel proud of our facilities at present, though those who have journeyed long with Southpointe are certainly glad of the improvements they have seen over time. Nevertheless, parents, students, faculty and staff have long hoped for a new school, and several have ‘hung in’ on the promise of better.

We need a new school to put a spring in our step and enable us to feel proud of where we work and learn.

Attraction and Retention

There is no doubt that both potential families and applicant teachers have been deterred by our facilities. Indeed, some families who have been deterred are here, but simply to wait for space to become available elsewhere. This fact can easily enrage those of us who are passionately committed to our school, but, so long as it remains a fact, it hampers our progress in both enrolment and retention.

Less well-understood is the effect of our facilities on the recruitment of teachers. As we grow, we seek to employ superior teachers to join our outstanding core team. Both our existing team and their future colleagues wish to have the working conditions that enable them to work to their highest potential. I have nothing but profound admiration for our current faculty who produce spectacular results from less than optimal conditions: think of our PE teachers, for instance, who often teach outdoors in all weathers, our Science teachers with but a single laboratory; our MYP teachers who need their students, especially the boys, to have space to move about, but who do not have it. They are all marvels, but they deserve better conditions to show their true worth. We need a new school to attract more students, to attract superior teachers and to retain the students and teachers we already have.

Capacity

While parents concern themselves with class-size and educational outcomes , students concern themselves with whether they like school or not. Students like school when they have friends there. It is particularly true of the senior part of our school that we currently have too few students; a result of this is that the ‘pool’ of potential friends is too small.

Our current facilities are full at 450 students. We would be greatly helped were we to be able to accommodate more. More students give all students a better chance of finding like-minded friends and so enjoying a happier school experience.

More students also mean better educational experiences and outcomes: more elective choices are possible; group activities such as teams, plays, bands and choirs become more consistent; and the provision of better support services, such as librarians, IT support and laboratory aides, becomes more viable

We need a new school to increase our capacity to the mid-500’s.

Stewardship

It is often the case in a conversion that some of the minor, less-obvious, needs of a school are not fully met. In our current premises, we have insufficient storage and both insufficient and poorly located office space. This combination of factors leads to great difficulty in maintaining the necessary careful stewardship of our resources. We do it, but at some cost. Correct office locations speed the flow of communication and enhance teamwork, key factors in stewardship. Another key factor is ‘a place for everything and everything in its place’. When it is necessary, as at present, to move things about frequently and store them pro-tem in many different locations, stewardship is much more difficult and time-consuming.

We need a new school to enable better communication flow and stewardship of resources.

Creating Community

They say that if you sit for long enough in Trafalgar Square, you will see everybody in the world! Every school that has one benefits from its ‘Trafalgar Square’ – a point through which all students pass at the beginning and end of each day, and frequently during the day, too. Such a spot enables community: a Headmaster (and all others who care to) can be there to see every student and teacher at least twice a day, to greet them as they arrive and bid them farewell as they leave. Information can be posted and seen, displays are guaranteed an audience, visitors are easily noticed and greeted; in short, a great sense of community can develop. We currently have no such space.

Uniting all facilities on one campus also creates community. When home athletic fixtures are in a remote location, it’s hard to create a ‘buzz’; when plays are being practised and performed out of sight they are often, too, out of mind. But, when the whole range of school activity is evident to

all, interest grows, support develops and vibrancy pervades a school. That vibrancy buoys the community, infuses it with spirit and makes people glad to be part of it.

We need a new school to create the community we can be.

Financial

A new school, purpose-built to high environmental standards, will reduce our operating expenses in utilities; our ownership of the school should lead to our receiving ‘permissive tax exemption’ from the Municipality in common with other non-profit schools – a saving of about \$165000 per year on property taxes; any increase in land and building values over time will accrue to us, increasing our financial flexibility ; increased enrolment will not require a proportional increase in costs, so enabling us to maintain our fees at a competitive level vis-à-vis other university prep schools; having our own excellent facilities available year-round will enable us to generate income in the summer vacation and, until we reach our new capacity, in term-time, too.

We need a new school to realise some significant financial benefits.

Summary

The case for a new school is compelling and irrefutable from all standpoints –educational, psychological and financial. Our current facilities constrain us too much. We are rapidly outgrowing them in all ways. We all need a new school.

WHY NOW?

One question remains: ‘Why now?’ We are, after all, in financially turbulent times; our enrolment has declined this past year; we have just introduced a capital fee; surely, this timing could not be worse?

On the contrary, we have an opportunity with a short time-span that will not be repeated. We have land available to us, ready zoned as we require, located ideally close to our current site and at a good price. We also have a motivated vendor with plans that need the funds from the land sale to proceed.

We can buy the land for \$1.75 million because it is zoned ‘institutional’: to buy a comparable piece of land zoned ‘commercial’, would cost at least \$6 million and it would then require re-zoning, a sometimes hazardous process.

The vendor needs the money from the sale to fund its own urgent plans: we cannot, therefore, expect the land to be available to us beyond our current option agreement, and that expires in January.

We cannot afford to buy the land and sit on it because the debt service costs would severely impact our operational capacity in our current facilities.

Add to all this the powerful, pent-up desire for a new school that is evident in all our current stakeholders, and ‘Now’ becomes a necessity, an imperative. We may never again have such an alignment of opportunity.

Tonight, you have heard the vision and heard your children singing of the way forward –one heart, one school, let’s get together and be all right!

We hope you will feel inspired to continue as a Southpointe family by helping our school forward. You will soon, we hope, attend a meeting where our financial plans will be discussed and you will be asked to participate in the funding of our school. It is important that you have the opportunity to learn more, therefore, before you attend the meeting. We hope the following information will be of help.

THE PLANNED NEW SCHOOL

The Details

- Situated at 56th Street and 19th Avenue, Tsawwassen
- Total site area approx 2 acres
- 4 storey building contains:

GROUND FLOOR

- Full Size Gymnasium with divider to enable 2 classes of PE simultaneously and spectator bleachers for 200 people.
- Change Rooms and Washrooms
- Fitness Room
- Activity Room
- Media Arts Room
- Grad Lounge
- Grad Commons
- Shipping/Receiving Area
- Teacher Lounge and Workroom
- Entry Lobby and Waiting Area
- Offices and Conference Room

- Reception

FIRST FLOOR

- FYP 13 Classrooms and Team Leader/Meeting room
- Storage and Janitor Closet
- Washrooms

SECOND FLOOR

- 8 MYP Classrooms
- 6 Seminar Rooms
- Art Room
- Drama Studio
- Band/Music Room with 3 internal practice rooms, teacher office and storage
- Multi-Purpose Room for MYP activities, assemblies etc.
- ILC
- Theatre -200 seats
- Washrooms

THIRD FLOOR

- Learning Commons and Library with internal mezzanine
 - 7 classrooms
 - 3 Science laboratories with Lab Tech Prep Areas
 - Roof Garden
 - Washrooms
- External features include Play area and Parking
 - Future development will include sports' field adjacent
 - School Capacity will be 575
 - All students, JK-12, will be accommodated in the new building

There is ample circulation and locker space and, though there is no cafeteria, there are far more non-classroom eating spaces than we currently have.

All floors are accessible by staircase and elevator.

The school will be built to high environmental standards.

The planned opening date for the new school is September 2011.

FINANCIAL

The cost of the project is anticipated to be \$17.5 million including the land and all fixtures, fittings and furnishings.

How we intend to finance the project

We anticipate borrowing 100% of the necessary funds from two main sources and one ancillary source.

The two main sources are the Bank and the School Families. Clearly, the more we can raise from the families, the less we need from the Bank.

The most we can borrow from the Bank, based on our current cash flows, is \$10 million. Before we can proceed, they need to see our equity from the families.

We have 250 families. What equity we can show if each family loans us certain amounts is:

25000	6.25 million
30000	7.5 million
35000	8.75 million
40000	10 million
45000	11.25 million
50000	12.5 million

The Board has, therefore, decided that each family will be required to purchase a minimum of \$25000 in Southpointe Bonds. Of course, we hope many will purchase a higher amount. The Bonds will be RRSP eligible and pay interest at the rate of 3% per annum. Families that choose to donate the Bonds to the school will, of course, receive a tax receipt.

Full details of this financing plan, together with answers to all your questions –for example how you sell your bonds when you no longer have children at the school- will be provided at the family meetings.

The ancillary source mentioned above is the purchase of naming rights to rooms in the new school –‘ The XYZ Gymnasium’ for example. Details of these opportunities will be released in time for the opening of the building.