

**Subject: FW: Notice of Motion - Report Councillor Crist;**

**Date:** Wed, 18 Feb 2004 21:48:11 -0800

**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

**To:** "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <cagebc@yahoo.com>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Ernie Crist

> Sent: February 18, 2004 9:43 PM

> To: Nathalie Valdes

> Subject: Notice of Motion - Report Councillor Crist;

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> Notice of Motion - Report - Councillor Crist:

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> That Council request of the Minister of Education that schools in the District of North Vancouver in danger of being closed due to a declining number of school age children be made available for childcare purposes.

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> Reason for Report:

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> A crisis has arisen in North Vancouver. Due to an apparent decline in the birthrate and subsequent decline of school aged children in local elementary schools the school board is contemplating closing several of those schools. School District 44 claims they must do this since they are short of funds and because there is a direct relationship between funding to school boards by the Ministry of Education and the number of school children in any given class. This at least is what I understand.

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> However, closing what are essentially neighborhood schools causes considerable anxiety among many of the parents who are affected and justifiably so. It would mean uprooting children from their own neighborhood school environment which is rarely a positive step. It would also mean considerable inconvenience for parents who are already heavily strained as many of them are working parents.

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> The issue is especially critical for single parents whose number is growing. In the event that School District 44 goes through with their intention, as seems to be the case, it would also mean additional financial as well as time demands on families. In many cases children could no longer walk to and from their schools but would have to be driven or bused which creates other problems.

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> At the same time there is a serious shortage of Childcare space in the community. This is evident from the applications of private childcare facilitators who on an ongoing basis request that the number of children they may accommodate in existing residential neighborhoods be increased. For the municipality to change the rules to accommodate more children creates other problems including opposition from adjoining residents who object to the additional traffic and noise of having many children in the immediate neighborhood.

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> The idea of accommodating childcare facilities in schools is certainly not new and has been exercised in most developed countries since the end of WW I and even before. That this is not the case in Canada appears to be an anomaly. The idea is also attractive since accommodating childcare space in existing schools would probably be less expensive than it is now when this has to be done by private operators in residential facilities.

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> All in all it is an idea whose time has come.


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> What is required however is for the local government to provide leadership and help bring this about. This can be done by the District of North Vancouver in conjunction with the School District making such a request to the Ministry of Education, and the Child and Family Welfare arm of the Provincial government. It could be the first step to make childcare universal and even part of the education system itself as is the case in other jurisdictions.

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