

October 15, 2019

Good evening. We are proud that our schools are active members of our community and strive to go over and above to support families.

As a District we recognize the importance of childcare to the community and have been a leader for more than 35 years in enabling space in our schools or on our properties. While it's not part of our education mandate, we want to build upon our existing legacy of supporting access to quality childcare – particularly as it relates to before and after school care.

In March, the Board directed staff to take the next step of a Project Definition Report to examine the current environment, needs, and anticipated future needs of childcare in our District. That report is now ready and will be discussed tonight.

The report outlines a thoughtful criteria that was applied when considering where we might be able to expand. A number of factors went into creating the recommendations, including extensive consultation with parent groups, childcare providers and other stakeholders. On behalf of the Board, thank you to all for participating. Your input was a key input to the project.

Staff also considered existing and projected student enrolment. Not all of our school sites can accommodate additional childcare. The report strives for an equitable approach in which all 41 elementary schools would have either access to a centre on their property or a hub. The hub approach would see multiple schools feeding into the nearby childcare centre, instead of just the school fortunate enough to have the facility.

We can offer a plan and location on our sites, but we need to partner with the City of Burnaby and Government of BC to fund it. A number of possible joint opportunities and both are identified in the Project Definition Report.

Childcare is an enormous issue throughout the country. As partners in the community we want to help. This is our contribution to childcare, not the solution to it in Burnaby. We want to do our part because this issue matters to all of us.

Gary Wong, Chair
Burnaby Board of Education