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NCLGA Member Communities
North Central British Columbia

13 March 2024

Good day to your local government,

RE: 2024 NCLGA Resolutions

To our fellow NCLGA members we write to share three items that the City of Prince George has submitted to the annual conference. This year, we have again resolved to look at items that are not only of interest to our region but that also impact those across the province.

We hope we can count on you to support these three items when the time comes and have included full text of each resolution with the background below for consideration.

The City of Prince George has already written to the relevant Ministers directly on each of these items. Still, if you would like to be involved in future advocacy, separate from the NCLGA process, please reach out and our staff will work to coordinate interest with any emerging opportunities.

Working together to:

- Enhance emergency response options for North Central BC.
- Expanding educational curriculum to fight hate.
- Develop a mechanism to ensure each of our communities receives appropriate revenues.

These are three items we feel are a benefit to us all. We look forward to discussing these resolutions, and meeting at the NCLGA AGM this May in Smithers!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Prince George City Council.

North Central Local Government Association - 2024 Resolution Submissions

Resolution #1: Host Community Reception Centre in the City of Prince George

WHEREAS the City of Prince George is proud, well positioned, and routinely provides host community support to the region as community's grapple with more frequent emergencies, and;

WHEREAS no dedicated facilities have been constructed in the region to appropriately manage this response, leading to frequent reception center relocations which add unnecessary strain on all involved;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Central Local Government Association requests the province fund a permanent Host Community Reception Centre in the City of Prince George for the North Central Local Government Area.

Background: The City of Prince George is proud to support our neighbors as a host community during emergencies. Activating the Prince George Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has become an almost annual task. The City set up some form of host community Emergency Social Services (ESS) reception centre in 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

For the 2023 season the City's EOC was activated on May 5th and continued to provide host community services until October 3rd (139 days). Within that period the ESS Reception Centre was moved 8 times to accommodate other municipal activities, adding unnecessary strain and confusion to the emergency operation as well as additional staff resources.

These movements were necessitated as no dedicated space for an ESS reception centre exists within the city. As such, civic facilities are used as they are available and reconfigured as prescheduled activities take place.

The proposed solution to this challenge would be for the establishment of a purpose-built, seasonally activated, facility to function as a dedicated host community ESS reception centre. Locating that facility in Prince George, as the most central and well positioned host community in the region, is suggested. Document Number: 703364 2

Resolution #2: Mandatory Holocaust Education in BC's Elementary Schools

Whereas Statistics Canada reported that there were 750 police reported hate crimes targeting religious minorities during 2022, of which 502 or 66.9% were aimed at Jews, and

Whereas Ontario recently became the first province to introduce mandatory Holocaust education into the elementary school curriculum,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED NCLGA recognizes the dangers of Holocaust denial and distortion, which so often targets our young people, and urges the Ministry of Education and Child Care to introduce mandatory Holocaust education to elementary schools as of the 2024-25 academic year.

Background: School boards are a vital governing body in our system and this resolution is intended to support our partners in their area of jurisdiction. Work has begun to suggest that a similar motion be advanced through the appropriate bodies by school district leadership. Still, as local governments have a social responsibility, and keen interest in, helping to foster inclusive diverse and peaceful communities it is appropriate that the membership of NCLGA considers this motion to advocate for mandatory Holocaust education in BC's elementary schools.

This is necessary as:

- In its 2022 audit of antisemitic incidents, B'nai Brith, Canada's oldest Jewish advocacy organization, nationally active since 1875, noted there were 2769 such incidents across Canada during the year of which 242 were in British Columbia.
- Statistics Canada in its 2022 document released July 27, 2023 on police-reported crime in Canada indicated that there were 750 police reported hate crimes targeting religious minorities during 2022, of which 502 or 66.9% were aimed at Jews.
- Ontario recently became the first province to introduce mandatory Holocaust education into the elementary school curriculum. Jewish organizations are urging all provinces and territories to introduce mandatory Holocaust education in elementary school.
- In tasking the Ontario College of Teachers to create an age-appropriate curriculum to teach the Holocaust starting in Grade 6, Education Minister Stephen Lecce indicated that according to the first study of antisemitism and Holocaust knowledge conducted by Western University and Liberation75 in 2021, 42 per cent of students surveyed said they have unequivocally witnessed an antisemitic event. This same study also found that one in three students in Ontario thought the Holocaust was fabricated, exaggerated or are unsure if it actually happened.
- Research compiled in the United States suggests that jurisdictions which make Holocaust education compulsory not only witness a dramatic decline in antisemitic incidents but also see a sizeable reduction in hate aimed at Blacks and Asians. A further study issued in September 2023 indicates that where Holocaust studies begin earlier in school and are mandatory there is heightened warmth toward religious and racial minorities.
- As survivors pass away, it is more important than ever that our schools play a key role in preserving Holocaust remembrance thereby protecting children from widespread Holocaust denial and distortion often disseminated online.

Resolution submission #3: Taxation on School District Property

WHEREAS there does not readily appear to be a mechanism by which local governments can recuperate the equivalent of property tax for childcare centers operating on school property, a placement that is encouraged by provincial policy, and;

WHEREAS local governments need every opportunity to collect the appropriate revenue for providing our wide range of services considering inflationary pressures and the challenges posed by asset management;

THEREFORE, NCLGA advocates to the Minister of Education and Child Care that a mechanism by which local governments can recuperate the equivalent of property tax for childcare centers operating on school property be established.

Background: The City of Prince Geore is supportive of the province's efforts to increase the number of childcare spaces across the province. However, concurrently, we ask that there be thought given to a mechanism by which local governments can recoup the equivalent of property tax for childcare centers operating on school property. While these facilities are much needed, we note that the unique placement of these operations, specifically encouraged by provincial policy, moves a greater number of these businesses, outside of the municipal jurisdiction to levy taxes. This is challenging financially and as all local government strive to ensure equitable taxation to service providers across the community.