

Re: PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS

On October 20, 1975, Council tabled for two weeks a report from the Chief Librarian on the Library Board's proposed building program, and also, comments on Council's request for information on the feasibility of establishing public libraries in school buildings (Item 14, Report No. 66). The tabled report was considered at the regular November 3 meeting of Council and at that time the following resolution was adopted:

"That the subject matter be tabled and further that a special meeting be called by the Chair during the month of December, 1975."

Following is the Library Board's revised report on public libraries in school buildings. The Board at its meeting on November 13, 1975 requested that this be referred to Council for consideration. It should be noted that the amendments are marked with parenthesis for easy reference.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the subject report be tabled until the special meeting between Council and the Library Board.

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TO: MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

18 November 1975

FROM: BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

RE: PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Subsequent to the submission of this report to Municipal Council on 20 October 1975, the Library Board regularly moved, seconded and carried

"That the report on school-housed public libraries be amended by the addition of the words 'The Burnaby Public Library Board has approved the following motions that together provide guidelines for its future activities in this matter.' followed by recommendations #1, #2, #3, #4 and #6 (delete recommendation #5) and adding the recommendation 'That Council concur with this report'."

This report is in response to a request by Municipal Council on 21 July 1975 as follows:

"That Burnaby Public Library Board study the matter of putting a library within school buildings in the Sullivan Heights area and submit a report to Council in this regard."

General

The concept of combining a public library and a school facility appears to be a good way in which to save tax dollars. It is thought that the combined library enables economies in both capital and operating costs: expensive reference books and other library materials can be used both by the public and by students while other costs are reduced. At the same time school buildings used only for a few hours during the day can be more extensively used by the public. The concept of combining facilities is not innovative: it has been tried for over 100 years and has been found generally to be unsuccessful both in terms of economy and service to the public.

The Library Board has studied this matter over the years and has a comprehensive file of documentation compiled from a wide variety of sources. This material is available for reference by Council. The basic arguments may be summarised as outlined below.

Aims and Objectives

"The unique role of the school library ... is to serve the instructional needs of a limited clientele - students and teachers." (Canadian School Library Association Standards). These special needs affect all aspects of the service: facilities, personnel, book collections, programmes and readers. The collections reflect curriculum needs.

The public library exists to serve without restriction all members of the community. The library "gathers, organises, integrates and disseminates past and present ideas, values, facts and creative insights necessary to enable individuals, regardless of age, background and position, to meet the demands of today's urban society and to share in the future of that society" so that people may pursue their own interests at the pace and level they choose.

Location

Schools tend to be located in residential or park areas, surrounded by playgrounds and removed from business and industry, highways and pedestrian thoroughfares.

Public libraries should be located in the heart of shopping areas with good pedestrian and vehicle access by both adults and children.

Access

The school library is placed in such a location within the school to permit maximum use by the closed society it serves.

Public libraries must be conveniently located with easy access by the elderly and handicapped as well as by children and preschool users. The public library is designed to attract readers from all walks of life and attempts to reach out into the community it serves.

Administration

School libraries are staffed by school librarians with specialised salaries, training and conditions of employment. School libraries tend to be the direct responsibility of school principals who, in turn, are governed by an administration appointed by an elected School Board within the terms of the Public Schools Act.

Public libraries are staffed by professional librarians with salaries and working conditions established by a Library Board appointed by Municipal Council within the terms of the Public Libraries Act.

Collections

School library collections are established according to standards that reflect the school curriculum. Special emphasis is given to educational multi/media. Adult materials aimed at the general reader may be excluded in elementary schools while picture books for preschoolers will have a low priority in secondary schools.

The public library must provide a broader subject field without being limited by heavy student demand in specific areas. A general collection at the branch library level is inadequate for intensive school services while duplicate copies of texts are in little demand by the general public.

Reader Disadvantages

School programmes carried out in the library may be interrupted by the presence of adults. Restrictions on public use during school hours will inconvenience the public. Class visits from other schools will be difficult.

Adults are reluctant to use public libraries located in schools while the schools are open. When the schools are closed the location or site of the school will deter many readers. Children attending other schools are reluctant to use public libraries located in school buildings especially during vacations. If the library is open to the public during school hours public use will be inhibited by school activities.

Size

School libraries designed on enrollment standards tend toward collections of between 6,000 and 10,000 volumes. The establishment of public library collections in schools will require construction of buildings. Catchment areas are smaller than those required for effective public library service at levels other than that of the neighbourhood centre.

Community branch libraries are designed for collections of between 50,000 and 60,000 volumes, neighbourhood branch libraries for collections between 20,000 and 30,000 volumes. Economics resulting from joint construction will be insufficient to overcome the basic disadvantages of poor location. If more school libraries open to the public, readership will be dispersed with wastage from duplicating some collections at many service outlets as distinct from the public library concept of developing comprehensive and systematic book collections within a multilevel service.

School/Public Libraries: Local Case Histories

1. City of Vancouver

At present a school trustee has been appointed a regular member of the Library Board. Each project has a joint school/public library committee. There is also a joint coordinating committee with oversight of all such projects.

Project No I

Killarney Secondary School is open to the public and includes 13,000 public library books. It is staffed by the public library from 3:30 pm to 9:00 pm Monday to Thursday and 9:00 am to 5:30 pm on Saturday. The remainder of the time it is staffed by school library staff. It has been only a limited success since it has an inconvenient location for the public and the school environment has been a deterrent in this locality. The circulation has now reduced to only 50% of what it was when the library opened. It is now the most expensive service point of any operated by Vancouver Public Library in terms of circulation. (Approximately half of the circulation per man-hour required within Burnaby Public Library.) The school principal and librarian are interested in the library's success as a community library, but it remains essentially a school library used by students. The provision of public library materials has allowed the high school to enjoy what has been reported as being probably "the best school library in British Columbia".

Project No II

The Strathcona Elementary School is a community library serving all children. There are no adult books within the library. The library is located in the community centre adjacent to the school. It has been successful as a children's library but there have been difficulties experienced in non-Strathcona students feeling free to use the library. The public librarian spends most of the time in extra-mural work in groups in the community and at other schools.

Project No III

The new community centre at Britannia includes a secondary and elementary school library combined with a public library in a 10,000 square foot area. This community library poses a number of administrative problems in joint staffing especially in terms of pay and conditions of service. A separate Board has been established to administer this service. Very careful planning went into the development of this new service and its success will be largely dependent on the quality of staffing. Initial observation indicates that the needs of the general public may be overwhelmed by school use.

Project No IV

West End Community Centre. This is planned for a public library branch to be on the main floor with a school library serving King George Secondary School on the floor above linked by stairs. Useful cooperation in collections and services should be a possibility since the school library will be open to the public (providing that it can be staffed for public library hours.) This project may be the most successful of any reported upon insofar as the King George and Vancouver Public libraries will be separate but cooperating and not within the school itself. The West End Community Centre has the advantage of being in an excellent location on Denman Street.

2. Coquitlam

Centennial Community Library

Coquitlam had no public library service until December 1969 when the Centennial High School was selected to house both the school and community library. There is no separate library entrance. There is an integrated collection of 75,000 volumes. Service to younger children is restricted, however, a very small collection has been made available but there is no children's librarian nor is programming done. If this use is expanded a space problem will be created. There is no library board governing this public library: the municipality makes a grant to the School Board which provides library service to the public on behalf of the community. The librarian is subordinate to the school principal. It should be noted that a number of reports have been made by various committees in Coquitlam with a view to establishing a public library within the terms of the Public Libraries Act of British Columbia. At the moment a consultant is to be engaged to carry out a complete survey of the requirements for adequate library service in Coquitlam.

3. Burnaby

Visits were made to the schools listed below and information was obtained from School Board administrative staff.

I - Lyndhurst Elementary School

Lyndhurst Elementary School has an enrollment of approximately 180 pupils. The school contains eight classrooms, one of which is presently used as a school library/resource centre. The location of this school on Lyndhurst Street is inappropriate for consideration as a potential branch library to serve this area.

II - Cameron Elementary School

Cameron School, located on Erickson Drive, has a present enrollment of 315 students (K-7). There are 17 classrooms and the school library, which had a circulation of 20,000 in 1974, is housed in a double room. One classroom is presently empty at this school. It was doubtful whether this could be used even on a temporary basis and was expected to be in use after June 1976. This school is situated adjacent to Lougheed Mall. Access to the mall, however, is not readily evident and requires traversing a car park through two chainlink fences and one road before entering the schoolgrounds. This school is in the best location in terms of public library use.

III - Stoney Creek Elementary School

The direct distance between Lyndhurst School and Stoney Creek School is approximately one quarter of a mile. Access is made difficult by the existence of a ravine and park. This school is presently serving 150 pupils as an elementary school. A middle school serving grades 5 through 8 will be established approximately 1978 and enrollment is anticipated to increase eventually to about 500. It contains a school library on the

second floor. The development of the area north of Stoney Creek School will increase the catchment area. The Parks and Recreation Department are now investigating the possibility of establishing facilities in this area. Although the future development of the area for housing will place Stoney Creek in the geographical centre, it is doubtful whether any use would be made of a library in that area by those residents east of Noel Drive. It is unsuitable as a location for public library purposes.

Conclusion

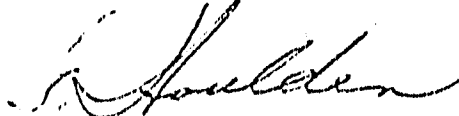
On the basis of the evidence gathered by the Library Board, the establishment of a public library in a school building can not at this time be recommended. For example, a careful compilation of statistics presented in the comprehensive survey of the community and its use of libraries that was carried out for the Library Board in 1973 indicates clear evidence of the need to construct well-located branch libraries if the requirements of citizens, particularly children and young people, are to be met with effective library service in Burnaby. However, careful scrutiny of current developments in the City of Vancouver will be maintained since it is apparent that the degree of success to be achieved by the joint use of facilities is largely dependent upon the degree of preliminary planning carried out. Additionally, it seems evident from the library's file of documentation that joint use of facilities is more successful in a well-located community centre than in a school.

The Burnaby Public Library Board has approved the following motions that together provide guidelines for its future activities in this matter:

1. THAT the Library Board maintain its liaison with the Burnaby School Board with particular reference to the report of the Task Team on Community Schools.
2. THAT the Burnaby Public Library Board continue to emphasise its policy of cooperation with Burnaby Parks and Recreation Commission and other agencies and institutions in order to develop effective services to taxpayers in Burnaby.
3. THAT Burnaby Public Library Board continue to observe the current integrated school and public library experiments in Vancouver and other areas.
4. THAT Burnaby Public Library Board develop a statement of criteria required for the establishment of an integrated school and public library in Burnaby.
5. That interim service be provided by means of a mobile library to those areas not served by branch libraries.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council concur with this report.


G. Houlden, Chairman
Burnaby Public Library Board.