

TO: CITY MANAGER

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING AND  
DIRECTOR RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SCHOOL DESIGNATION  
FOR MAYWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PURPOSE: To respond to Council's request for information on designation of Maywood Elementary School as a community school.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** Council
  - a) join the Burnaby School Board in designating Maywood Elementary School as a community school,
  - b) direct staff to include sufficient funds for the Maywood designation in the City's 1998 Provisional Operating Budget, and
  - c) send a letter to the Burnaby School Board, accompanied by a copy of this report, indicating Council's decision to support the community school designation for Maywood Elementary School.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee.

**REPORT**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

At its meeting of 1996 October 28, Council received a letter from the Chairperson of the Burnaby School Board regarding the reopening of Maywood Elementary School. The letter indicated that the reopening had presented various challenges, including

- ▶ provision of adequate classroom space to accommodate the educational needs of the school's roughly 200 students
- ▶ creation of a safe and secure school site where the children can learn and play
- ▶ development of a framework to link the school with its culturally diverse school population

To help it in meeting these challenges, the School District assigned an experienced community school coordinator to Maywood. The Board was able to obtain funds for this position through the Ministry of Education's Social Equity Branch. To be eligible for the funds, the Board needed to designate Maywood as a community school.

In his letter to Council, the Chairperson of the School Board indicated that the designation of Maywood was made to secure a Provincial grant; it would not commit the Board or City to fund Maywood as a community school in the future. Arising from consideration of the letter, Council adopted a motion which called upon staff to prepare a report on the specifics of designating Maywood Elementary as a community school. This report responds to that request.

## **2.0 COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

In 1977, the City and School Board adopted a joint resolution for the funding and operation of community schools in Burnaby. At present, the two parties share in the funding of six community schools: Gilmore, Lochdale, Stoney Creek, Stride, Second Street, and Edmonds. The 1997 Provisional Operating Budget allocation for community schools is \$261,237, which covers roughly 50% of the cost of operating a community school for a twelve month period.

The District Community School Advisory and Coordinating Committee (DCSACC) is in place to serve as an advisory body to the School District and City on Burnaby's community school program. One of the DCSACC's responsibilities is to develop the yearly operating budget for Burnaby's community school operations. Another is to assess community school designation requests and make recommendations to the School Board and City regarding designation status, funding, and operational matters. The DCSACC consists of a chairperson, representatives of Burnaby's six community schools, a School Trustee, a Parks Commissioner, and a City Councillor. Staff resources from the School District and City also attend DCSACC meetings.

At the operational level, a Community School Management Team is in place. The team consists of the two representatives from the School District (the Director of Community Education Services and Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Schools) and two from the City (Assistant Director Recreation & Cultural Services and Senior Social Planner). The Management Team serves as the "working arm" of the DCSACC, assuming responsibility for the management and administrative aspects of the community school operations. An immediate task before the Management Team is to develop recommendations for a long term strategic plan for community schools. The DCSACC asked the Team to undertake this work in 1997 January.

### **3.0 MAYWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

As indicated, Maywood Elementary School was designated a community school for the purpose of obtaining Provincial funding last fall. With the Provincial in place, the school has been able to retain a coordinator for the 1996 - 97 school year. The City has not been asked to provide cost sharing assistance for 1997. If a Provincial grant cannot be obtained for next year, the School District would look to the City for funding in order to continue operating Maywood as a community school.

At present, there are two approaches for designation of community schools in Burnaby. The first could be termed the "community-driven" approach. This approach is typified by schools such as Lochdale, in which community members take the initiative to pursue the community school designation through appropriate channels. The second approach could be termed the "needs-driven" approach, as typified by Stride and Edmonds Community Schools. Under this approach, reliance is not placed on community members to mobilize and pursue a community school designation. Rather, the School District and others identify areas which, because of intrinsic social needs particular to the area, could benefit from having a community school.

Clearly, Maywood Elementary School fits the criteria of a "needs-driven" community school. District officials report that residents of the Maywood School catchment area speak a multitude of languages, come from a diversity of countries, have relatively low incomes and high levels of unemployment, and experience various other social needs. Given these circumstances, parents often face difficulties in finding the time, energy, and resources to provide a varied, stimulating and safe learning and social environment for their children. Although the community school has been in operation for less than a year, school officials and others state that it has already made a significant impact on the lives of students, families, and the larger community. Indeed, the school has provided Maywood with a "heart", offering a safe, secure, and welcoming focal point for the community. It is believed that the school would have been unable to make this impact without the additional resources and expertise available through the community school coordinator position.

### **4.0 DISCUSSION**

Given the acknowledged social needs in the Maywood area, and the apparent initial benefits that the school has provided to the community, it is believed that a community school designation for Maywood Elementary School by Burnaby would have merit. If Council supports this position, the City would need to notify the Burnaby School Board of the decision and authorize staff to include sufficient funds for the designation in the 1998 Provisional Operating Budget (an additional \$43,554 , at 1997 rates).

While acknowledging the merits of community school designation for Maywood Elementary School, City and School District staff believe that a more strategic approach needs to be taken in planning for future designations. In other words, rather than reacting to emerging needs, a process should be in place to anticipate future needs and make plans accordingly. Simply adding new community schools on a periodic basis will not suffice - especially in an era of diminishing resources.

The question of developing a long range strategic plan for the community school system was on the DCSACC's January agenda. As noted, the Community School Management Team will be preparing recommendations on this matter for a future DCSACC meeting.

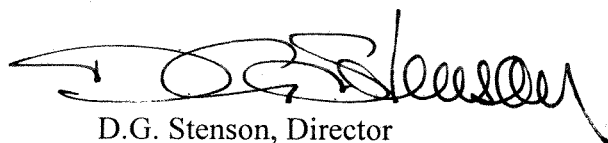
## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS


This report has responded to Council's request for further information on the potential designation of Maywood Elementary School as a community school. It has concluded that such a designation would have merit. It is therefore recommended that Council

- a) join the Burnaby School Board in designating Maywood Elementary School as a community school,
- b) direct staff to include sufficient funds for the Maywood designation in the City's 1998 Provisional Operating Budget, and
- c) send a letter to the Burnaby School Board, accompanied by a copy of this report, indicating Council's decision to support the community school designation for Maywood Elementary School.

It is also recommended that a copy of this report be sent to the Parks & Recreation Commission and Community Issues & Social Planning Committee for their information.

As indicated, the Community School Management Team will be developing recommendations for a long term strategic plan for the community school system. Staff will keep Council apprised as work on the strategic plan proceeds.

  
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PLANNING AND BUILDING

  
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RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

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cc: Director Finance