



RE: Childcare in every elementary school

Thank you for sharing your letter requesting that the district provide affordable universal and quality childcare for all children aged 5-12. Your letter was shared at a Special Board meeting held on August 31, 2022.

As you know the school district and the Province are working closely in building and providing childcare space across B.C. The Ministry of Education and Child Care's *Child Care Rapid Renovation Fund* is one way the province is quickly addressing the need for more affordable space for families in Nanaimo and Ladysmith. These funds are needed to build additional space at our schools, with the hope that we have childcare space available at every district elementary school.

The challenge we currently face, as explained in our [Long Range Facilities Plan](#), is the ever-increasing enrolment we are experiencing. It is projected that our schools will be 25 per cent over capacity by 2030. With more students, we are tasked with utilizing every inch of space in our schools for classrooms.

Staffing is also a concern. As with many other school districts and other local businesses or organizations, we are finding that there is a growing need for qualified, caring and competent staff but there is a challenge in filling those roles. The district has been very active in recruiting teachers and support staff and continues to this day.

Through the partnership with the Province, the school district does intend on improving accessibility for families while providing affordable childcare options in your community, however, this project will take time and continued financial support from the government. Furthermore, this topic was discussed at the September 13, 2022 Business Committee meeting where staff presented a [recommendation](#) that the Board approve a pilot before and after school care program for September 2023. The Board will decide on this motion at the September 28, 2022 Regular Board meeting.

We understand your concerns and are actively working towards a shared vision for our community.

If families have questions about future childcare space, we invite them to visit the district's childcare [webpage](#) which has contact information for each school's provider.

Sincerely,

Charlene McKay
Board Chair