

Clause embodied in Report No. 9 of the Community Services Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on October 29, 30 and 31, 2002.

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Shirley Street Public School Daycare Program

(City Council on October 29, 30 and 31, 2002, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Community Services Committee recommends:

- (1) that the provincial Minister of Education and Mr. Paul Christie, Supervisor for the Toronto District School Board, be demanded to ensure the continuation of the Shirley Street Public School Daycare Program;**
- (2) that the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services facilitate the provision of child care subsidies to families affected by the closure of the Shirley Street Public School Daycare Program; and**
- (3) that the Community and Neighbourhood Services Department encourage the establishment of a child care centre at this site.**

The Community Services Committee submits the following communication (October 10, 2002) from Councillor Mario Silva, Ward 18, Davenport:

Shirley Street Public School Daycare Program is recognized internationally as a success story. The program allows immigrant families to attend ESL classes to learn English while leaving their children in daycare. The cost is negligible and it supports parents to become integrated in society. I am therefore requesting that the Community Services Committee recommend that:

- the Toronto District School Board be requested to ensure the continuation of this program;
- the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services facilitate the provision of child care subsidies to families affected by the closure of the Shirley Public School Daycare Program; and
- the department encourage the establishment of a child care centre at the site.

(City Council on October 29, 30 and 31, 2002, had before it, during consideration of the foregoing Clause, the following report (October 16, 2002) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services:

Purpose:

This report summarizes the City's action in response to the threatened closure of the child minding service at Shirley Street Public School.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications from this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

Background:

After several years of operation, the Toronto District School Board announced its intention to close the child minding service, which supports the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes operating at Shirley Street School as of October 11, 2002. The child minding service provides supervised on-site care for 11 children of families attending the ESL classes. While this child minding service provides quality care to the children, it is not required to be licensed under the Ontario Day Nurseries Act because the children's parents are also on site. Families using this child minding service are not required to pay fees.

At its October 10, 2002 meeting, the Community Services Committee directed the Community and Neighbourhood Services Department to facilitate the provision of child care subsidies to families affected by the pending closure of the Shirley Street child minding service and to arrange placement of their children into a licensed child care program. Staff were also directed to explore the future establishment of a licensed child care centre at the Shirley Street School site.

Comments:

The Children's Services Division assessed all families whose children were using the Shirley Street child minding site and determined that 10 of the 11 families qualified for childcare subsidy. The eleventh family indicated its willingness and ability to pay full fee at Brock Day Care Centre. Placement arrangements were made for all children to begin received licensed child care at the Brock Day Care Centre effective October 15, 2002 should the child minding service at Shirley Street School close as planned. Brock Day Care Centre is located approximately one block from the Shirley Street School.

In addition, Children's Services had preliminary discussions with the Provincial Licensing Authority and with Brock Day Care Centre about the future possibility of establishing a licensed child care program at Shirley Street School should the child minding service close as expected on October 11, 2002. It was agreed that such a program could potentially be operated as a satellite of the current Brock Day Care Centre.

Concurrent with the efforts made by Children's Services to find subsidized licensed child care options for affected families, the Toronto Foundation for Student Success was also working on strategies to prevent the Shirley Street child minding service from closing. On October 11, 2002 the Toronto Foundation for Student Success announced interim funding to cover the costs of the child minding program for the balance of the year and has moved it into the Parent and Family Literacy Centre located at Shirley Street School.

As of October 15, 2002, two of the families attending ESL classes at Shirley Street School decided to place their children in the licensed program at Brock Day Care Centre although the child minding service at Shirley Street remains open.

Conclusions:

As a result of the action taken by both the City of Toronto and the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, families enrolled in ESL classes at Shirley Street School are having their childcare needs met in the program of their choice.

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