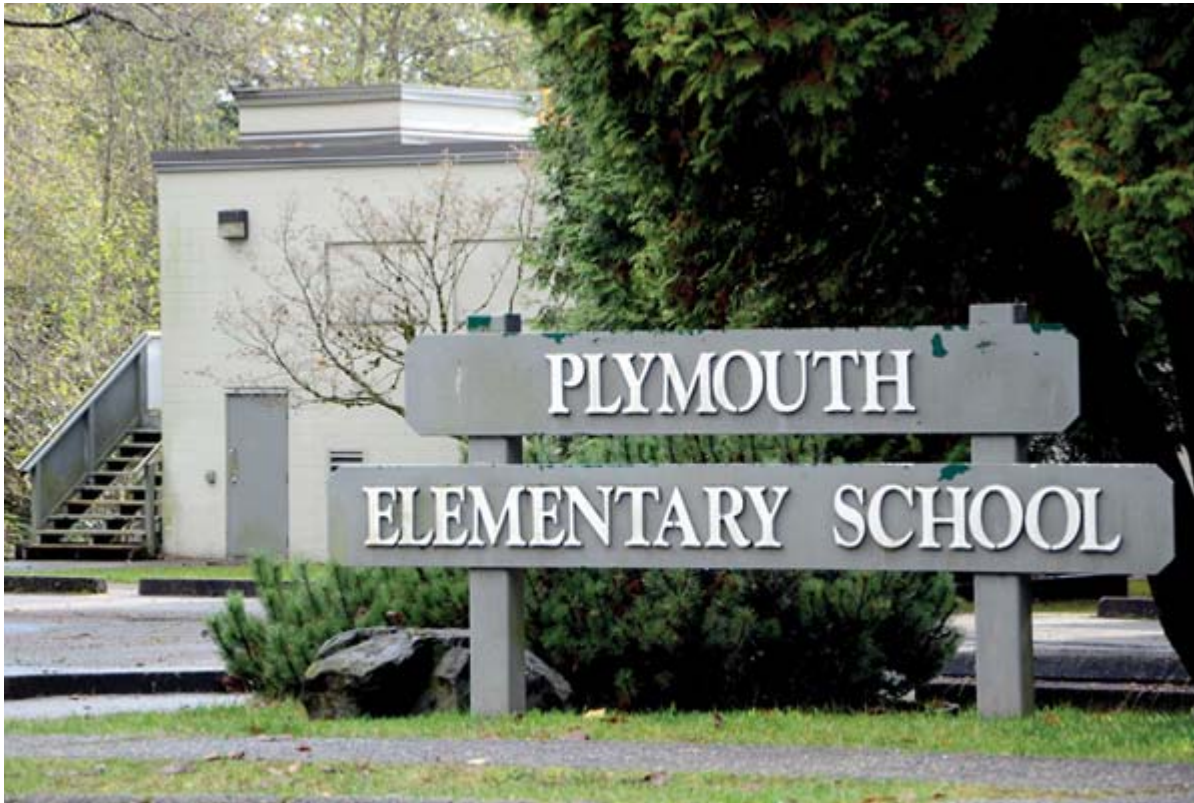


Plymouth school repurposed

BY BRENT RICHTER, NORTH SHORE NEWS MARCH 22, 2013



The North Vancouver school board will lease the Plymouth elementary site to the Tsleil-Waututh Nation for adult skill training.

Photograph by: NEWS photo, Mike Wakefield

THE shuttered Plymouth elementary school in east Seymour is destined for new life as a place of education again.

The North Vancouver school board is in the process of negotiating a long-term lease with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation to convert the Tollcross Road property to a skills training centre.

Once renovated, the school will serve as classroom space for the Tsleil-Waututh and their educational partners for several skills training programs

"We're currently offering adult basic education and we're busting at the seams in our current locations, so we have a huge demand for classroom space," said Angela George, the band's director of community development.

"We have several other partnership initiatives in the training and employment fields and our intention is to continue to foster those partnerships to better meet the needs of the local labour market."

Some of the possible curricula for the old school are chef and trades training, green energy sector training, as well as health and science career education.

Classes at the school will be open to all.

"We have a small membership and probably 10 to 20 per cent of our class rosters are Tsleil-Waututh

Nation. The demand is for the whole larger community and I think that's going to continue to grow," George said.

The band will still have to go through a rezoning and building permit process with the District of North Vancouver, meaning the public will have an opportunity to offer comment for council to consider, but, George said, the goal is to keep the community involved throughout the process.

"We'd like to find mechanisms to have community involvement and input to make sure we uphold that integrity," she said.

"Tsleil-Waututh Nation is in the community. We are the local community as well and our interest is in maintaining the community feel of that area."

The Tsleil-Waututh beat out bids from Darwin Properties, Lions Gate Christian Academy and Polygon Pacific Homes for potential re-use or redevelopment of the site.

Revenue from the lease will go towards school board programming and capital projects.

The school board is in the process of divesting several former properties closed as the number of school-aged children in the population declined.

Ridgeway Annex is in the process of being sold to developer Anthem Properties and Keith Lynn secondary is destined to be a new location for North Shore Studios.

brichter@nsnews.com

© Copyright (c) North Shore News