

LETTER: Kudos to council for stand on school lands

North Shore News

February 9, 2016 08:39 AM

Dear Editor:

Re: **Old vs. New School** (<http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-old-versus-new-school-1.2154713>), Jan. 20
Viewpoint

Your editorial opens with the assertion that members of district council, by turning down the rezoning application for the Braemar land parcel, had forced the option of rebuilding a seismically unsound school upon the board of education and had shirked their responsibility in the process. You later contradict yourself by stating that a new Argyle will still get its rebuild but likely with fewer of the public amenities that make a school truly part of the community. Let's be clear, a brand new and enhanced Argyle can be built without the sale of the

Braemar land parcel. In addition to the \$37.8 million that the province will contribute, an amount equal to the cost of a seismic upgrade, the board also has \$11.38 million from the sale of the Monterey and Keith Lynn sites for a total of \$49.2 million. The cost of the basic new school for Argyle is \$45.7 million, leaving the board a surplus of \$3.5 million to cover the cost of building one of the two facilities on the wish list of the "preferred option" now. The other, if essential, could be built at a later and more economically opportune time. On the wish list: a 1,000-square-metre multi-purpose/performing arts area and a 766 sq. m classroom/recreation space.

Rather than shirking their responsibilities and forgetting what they signed up for, as your editorial asserts, members of district council did precisely what they were elected to do.

Cognizant of the fact that a new and enhanced Argyle would be built without the board continuing its fire sale on irreplaceable public land; cognizant of the fact that a significant and meaningful investment in students was already being made; and cognizant of the fact that a public hearing would only confirm the existence of two diametrically opposed groups of citizens, the councillors made an informed but difficult decision based on principle and in the interest of the community as a whole.

Mark Twain once advised to invest in land "because they aren't making it anymore." **Holding public land for the benefit of the next generations will ultimately be of much greater benefit to the community as a whole than exchanging it in the present for depreciating buildings.** Council members should be applauded for taking a difficult but principled position.

James Gill

North Vancouver

What are your thoughts? Send us a letter via email by clicking [here \(http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter\)](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter) or post a comment below.

© 2016 North Shore News

[Sign up for the North Shore News FREE digital newsletter to receive top headlines from each issue in your Inbox. \(http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe\)](http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe)