

north shore news

LETTER: Shuttering schools not the answer

North Shore News

May 2, 2014 12:00 AM

Dear Editor:

Re: Cloverley, Lucas Plans Presented, April 25 I must take exception to one statement made by writer Brent Richter in his article on the proposed changes of use to the school properties on Cloverley and the Lucas Centre.

He stated: "The declining number of school-aged kids on the North Shore has led the district to shutter some schools and look to either sell or lease the land."

Government of Canada census data from 2011 shows that the number of children ages 0 to 19 in the City and District of North Vancouver is virtually the same as the numbers counted in the census of 1996. And, I suspect that the census numbers of 2016 will show that we will have surpassed our historical highs for schoolaged children.

Brent Richter should have said that the number of school-aged kids attending public schools in District 44 is declining. District 44 data indicates that their enrolment has declined by 40 per cent since 1996, but census data indicates the decline has not been caused by a lack of children.

That information clearly indicates that the selling or leasing of school properties is the wrong approach to solving the district's issue of declining enrolment. The trend will only be exacerbated if the district continues to have fewer and fewer schools.

The district should be focusing on programs that will attract children and parents back to the public system to fill the empty classrooms, rather than on selling public properties that can never be reclaimed.

Rick Burns

North Vancouver

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