

COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: November 6, 2023

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Councillor Garth Frizzell, Chair, Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

SUBJECT: Resolution regarding Advocacy on Mandatory Holocaust Education in British Columbia

ATTACHMENT: Appendix A – Draft Resolution titled “Advocacy on Mandatory Holocaust Education in BC”

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. APPROVES the resolution attached as Appendix A to the report dated November 6, 2023 from the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs titled “Resolution regarding Advocacy on Mandatory Holocaust Education in British Columbia” to be submitted to the North Central Local Government Association; and
2. DIRECTS Administration to share the resolution with School District No. 57.

PURPOSE:

For Council consideration.

BACKGROUND:

At the November 6, 2023, Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs meeting, the committee discussed an interest in acting on the troubling rise of antisemitic sentiment. It was noted that Statistics Canada in its 2022 document released July 27, 2023, on police-reported crime in Canada indicated that there were 750 police reported hate crimes targeting religious minorities during 2022, of which 502 or 66.9% were aimed at the Jewish community.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs requests Council’s approval of the attached resolution advocating for mandatory Holocaust education in British Columbia and, if approved, will submit the resolution for consideration at the 2024 North Central Local Government Association Convention to be held in May 2024. Further, the committee requests Council’s consideration to forward the resolution to School District No. 57 for their information and consideration to support through their organization.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Councillor Garth Frizzell, Chair
Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

Meeting Date: 2023/11/20



Appendix A

Proposed Resolution

Date: November 6, 2023

To: Mayor and Council

From: Garth Frizzell

Subject: Advocacy on Mandatory Holocaust Education in BC

Attachment:

RECOMMENDATION:

That Prince George Council recognize the dangers of Holocaust denial and distortion which so often targets our young people;

That this Council, through NCLGA, urge the Ministry of Education and Child Care to introduce mandatory Holocaust education to British Columbia's elementary schools as of the 2024-2025 academic year.

DISCUSSION:

Whereas in its 2022 audit of antisemitic incidents, B'nai Brith, Canada's oldest Jewish advocacy organization, nationally active since 1875, noted there were 2769 such incidents across Canada during the year of which 242 were in British Columbia;

Whereas Statistics Canada in its 2022 document released July 27, 2023 on police-reported crime in Canada indicated in Table 6 that there were 750 police reported hate crimes targeting religious minorities during 2022, of which 502 or 66.9% were aimed at Jews,

Whereas Ontario recently became the first province to introduce mandatory Holocaust education into the elementary school curriculum,

Whereas in tasking the Ontario College of Teachers to create an age appropriate curriculum to teach the Holocaust starting in Grade 6, Education Minister Stephen Lecce indicated that according to the first study of antisemitism and Holocaust knowledge conducted by Western University and Liberation75 in 2021, 42 per cent of students surveyed said they have unequivocally witnessed an antisemitic event;

Whereas this same study also found that one in three students in Ontario thought the Holocaust was fabricated, exaggerated or are unsure if it actually happened;

Whereas research compiled in the United States suggests that jurisdictions which make Holocaust education compulsory not only witness a dramatic decline in antisemitic incidents but also see a sizeable reduction in hate aimed at Blacks and Asians;

Whereas a study issued in September 2023 indicates that where Holocaust studies begin earlier in school and are mandatory that the data suggests that Americans with greater Holocaust knowledge display heightened warmth toward religious and racial minorities compared to others;

Whereas as survivors age and pass away, it is more important than ever that our schools play a key role in preserving Holocaust remembrance thereby protecting children from widespread Holocaust denial and distortion often disseminated online;

Whereas Jewish organizations are urging all provinces and territories to emulate Ontario's example and introduce mandatory Holocaust education in elementary school;

Therefore, Prince George Council recognizes the dangers of Holocaust denial and distortion, which so often targets our young people, and urges NCLGA to help advocate to the British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care to introduce mandatory Holocaust education to BC's elementary schools as of the 2024-2025 academic year.

Respectfully submitted,

Garth Frizzell
Councillor
City of Prince George