

City of Prince George

North Central Local Government Association - 2024 Resolution Submissions

Resolution #1: Host Community Reception Centre in the City of Prince George

WHEREAS the City of Prince George is proud, well positioned, and routinely provides host community support to the region as community's grapple with more frequent emergencies, and;

WHEREAS no dedicated facilities have been constructed in the region to appropriately manage this response, leading to frequent reception center relocations which add unnecessary strain on all involved;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Central Local Government Association requests the province fund a permanent Host Community Reception Centre in the City of Prince George for the North Central Local Government Area.

Background: The City of Prince George is proud to support our neighbors as a host community during emergencies. Activating the Prince George Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has become an almost annual task. The City set up some form of host community Emergency Social Services (ESS) reception centre in 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

For the 2023 season the City's EOC was activated on May 5th and continued to provide host community services until October 3rd (139 days). Within that period the ESS Reception Centre was moved 8 times to accommodate other municipal activities, adding unnecessary strain and confusion to the emergency operation as well as additional staff resources.

These movements were necessitated as no dedicated space for an ESS reception centre exists within the city. As such, civic facilities are used as they are available and reconfigured as prescheduled activities take place.

The proposed solution to this challenge would be for the establishment of a purpose-built, seasonally activated, facility to function as a dedicated host community ESS reception centre. Locating that facility in Prince George, as the most central and well positioned host community in the region, is suggested.

Resolution #2: Mandatory Holocaust Education in BC's Elementary Schools

Whereas Statistics Canada reported that there were 750 police reported hate crimes targeting religious minorities during 2022, of which 502 or 66.9% were aimed at Jews, and

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED NCLGA recognizes the dangers of Holocaust denial and distortion, which so often targets our young people, and urges the Ministry of Education and Child Care to introduce mandatory Holocaust education to elementary schools as of the 2024-25 academic year.

Background: School boards are a vital governing body in our system and this resolution is intended to support our partners in their area of jurisdiction. Work has begun to suggest that a similar motion be advanced through the appropriate bodies by school district leadership. Still, as local governments have a social responsibility, and keen interest in, helping to foster inclusive diverse and peaceful communities it is appropriate that the membership of NCLGA considers this motion to advocate for mandatory Holocaust education in BC's elementary schools. This is necessary as:

- 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.
- 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 Jews.
- Ontario recently became the first province to introduce mandatory Holocaust education into the elementary school curriculum. Jewish organizations are urging all provinces and territories to introduce mandatory Holocaust education in elementary school.
- 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. 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.
- 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. A further study issued in September 2023 indicates that where Holocaust studies begin earlier in school and are mandatory there is heightened warmth toward religious and racial minorities.
- As survivors 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.