

THE USE OF SCHOOL PREMISES AS COMMUNITY CENTRES  
IN THE DISTRICT OF WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA.

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Analysis of Information Received from the  
Canadian Welfare Council.

A. Reason for Procuring the Information.

An article appearing in "Canadian Welfare", July, 1948, contained interesting information concerning the wide use of schools as community-centres in Canada. In view of the attention which is at present being paid by the Department to the development of its community-centre work, and also for the benefit of the Johannesburg Youth Council, which is at present making a study in regard to the matter, it was decided to obtain further information on the Canadian scheme, as a guide to the possible use of local schools for similar purposes.

B. Copy of the Letter.

The following letter was sent to the Canadian Welfare Council on the 27th October, 1948:-

"I have noted with particular interest the following statement contained in a report of the introduction of community activities into the educational system of the North Western Territories of Canada, which was published in the July issue of "Canadian Welfare" (Vol. XXIV, No. 3, p. 39):-

'The emphasis being placed on community life was indicated by the fact that all new schools planned for erection in the Territories are designed to function not only as school plants but as community centres.'

"As my Department is contemplating the development of community centres in Johannesburg I am anxious to have further details concerning the use of school buildings as community centres and should be grateful if you would be so kind as to refer my enquiry to the relevant authority.

"I should be pleased to have information on the following matters and any other particulars which I have not specifically mentioned below but which might throw light on the scheme:-

1. By whom is the community centre programme to be conducted and under whose auspices? (I have the impression that the welfare teachers mentioned in your article would be responsible for inaugurating and administering the work under the auspices of the educational authorities.)
2. Would any particular community agency be enabled to conduct a community centre under its own auspices in school premises made available by the educational authorities?
3. If so, what would be the conditions in regard to rental

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of the premises by the community agency? By whom would equipment be purchased? If by the educational authorities, what would be the conditions in regard to rental of equipment?

4. If the community centre programme is not conducted by the teaching staff, what is the relationship of the community centre staff to the staff of the schools?
5. The costs of erecting and maintaining on school property buildings to be utilised for community purposes.
6. Legislation or other statutory measures enabling school premises to be put to community uses.
7. What are considered to be the relative advantages of a policy of erecting community centres independently of the schools and the policy of combining the two? Is this latter scheme considered the most satisfactory, or only to be adopted where no alternative provision can be made?
8. What are the activities conducted at the school community centres?
9. What is the average cost of erecting schools suitable for community use? What size of population would they be designed to serve?
10. What is the average cost of operating community centres in school property?
11. What categories of persons are eligible for membership?
12. What part do members play in the administration of school community centre activities? What is the general basis of administration of these schemes?
13. Is a membership fee charged?

"It is realised that this enquiry covers a wide field and answers should, therefore, only be given to those questions which can conveniently be dealt with."

#### C. Reply Received.

In the first reply from the Canadian Welfare Council received on the 1st February, 1949, it was stated that the queries had been forwarded to Dr. J. Pincock, Superintendent of Education for the Winnipeg School Board, who would supply information on the development of the community centre type of school in Winnipeg where this kind of development is taking place. The information obtained, as set out below, is that supplied by Dr. Pincock, in a letter received on the 14th March, 1949.

#### D. Analysis of Information Received.

1. By whom is the community centre programme to be conducted and under whose auspices?

Community centre programmes in the district of Winnipeg are conducted under the Recreation Committee of the City of

Winnipeg which employs a Director, in co-operation with the Winnipeg School Board.

2. Would any particular community agency be enabled to conduct a community centre under its own auspices in school premises made available by the educational authorities?

It is stated that any community agency would be enabled to conduct a community centre under its own auspices in school premises made available by the educational authorities, if their applications for the use of the school building was approved by the Director of Recreation employed by the City of Winnipeg, and the Commissioner of Buildings of the Winnipeg Schools.

3. If so, what would be the conditions in regard to rental of the premises by the community agency? By whom would equipment be purchased? If by the educational authorities, what would be the conditions in regard to rental of equipment?

The school buildings may be used free of charge by the following groups:-

- (a) By the teaching staff or pupils for purposes directly connected with the education of children.
- (b) By groups sponsored by responsible persons or recognised organisations for the training or entertainment of school children.
- (c) For school dances, school concerts or gymnastic displays of pupils attending the schools or anything of a like nature.
- (d) Civic elections, Dominion or Provincial elections.
- (e) Home and School Associations Clubs (Except that in cases where an admission fee or charge is made, payment of a permit fee is required equivalent to the cost of caretaking services).

Payment of a charge sufficient to reimburse the School District for all expenses incurred in permitting the use of the building is necessary for all other purposes in which event the permit issued must be approved by the sub-committee on the use of school buildings.

Community Clubs, Home and School Associations, etc. may obtain permission to use any equipment provided for day schools free of charge, but additional equipment not required for use of day school pupils must be provided by the City Recreation Committee or the local organisation using the school.

4. If the community centre programme is not conducted by the teaching staff, what is the relationship of the community centre staff and the staff of the schools?

It is stated that there is no relationship between the community centre staff and the staff of the schools.

5. The cost of erecting and maintaining on school property buildings to be utilised for community purposes.

In the District of Winnipeg buildings to be utilised for community purposes have not been erected on school property,

but new schools which are now being built are constructed with community needs in mind.

6. Legislation or other statutory measures enabling school premises to be put to community use.

Section 338(a) of the Public School Act for the Province of Manitoba reads as follows:- "The Trustees of the School District of Winnipeg No.1. shall have power to pass regulations for the use of school buildings and other property of the School District for any purpose".

7. What are considered to be the relative advantages of a policy of erecting community centres independently of the schools and the policy of combining the two? Is this latter scheme considered the most satisfactory, or only to be adopted where no alternative provision can be made?

Dr. Pincock states that Winnipeg is deliberately planning its schools to be used as community centres as well as day schools. In this way an expensive building owned by the citizens is used practically full time instead of its use being limited to five hours per day. Minor difficulties sometimes occur in operating this policy but the general advantages to the citizens at large and to the schools, in the opinion of Dr. Pincock, outweigh the disadvantages.

8. What are the activities conducted at the school community centres?

Recreational activities are conducted at the school community centres including educational activities such as use of the library; meetings of Home and School Associations, Community Clubs; physical training; games; hobbies; arts and crafts; discussion groups; entertainment; social dancing, etc.

9. What is the average cost of erecting schools suitable for community use? What size of population would they be designed to serve?

Dr. Pincock states that this question is difficult to answer as they have not had enough experience as yet in Winnipeg to determine the average cost. The most expensive school to be built cost approximately \$375,000. It provides student accommodation for about 400 pupils and has fairly extensive provision for community purposes. It serves a fairly large area of the city which has three other schools, each of which has some provision for community purposes, but not a great deal. In this new school an arrangement was made between the Recreational Committee of the City and the school authorities to combine their forces and use a large site, jointly owned by the Parks Board and the School Board. Separate buildings for community use have been constructed by the Parks Board and the community on part of the grounds. A community club house is one of these. There is provision on the grounds for many forms of adult recreation such as bowling, tennis, hockey, a large football field, and there is also a specially equipped playground for smaller children for use in the summer months. This joint effort has been much appreciated by this particular community, and it is proposed to have at least four or five such centres in the entire city, which has a population of approximately 225,000.

10. What is the average cost of operating centres on school property?

The community use of school buildings costs the Qinnipeg School Board approximately \$13,000 per year. This item is for the cost of extra caretaking, and does not include the cost of heating the schools, light, power, water, and general wear and tear on the buildings and equipment. It is stated that the exact figure for the cost of these additional items is unobtainable as these items are absorbed in the general school expenditure. The salaries of paid workers in community centres are not met by the Winnipeg School Board, but by the Recreation Committee or the community or both.

11. What categories of persons are eligible for membership?

Any person resident in the community is eligible for membership.

12. What part do members play in the administration of school community centre activities? What is the general basis of administration of these schemes?

The community centre activities are administered by the Director of Recreation for the City. Some paid help is employed. This is met by the Recreation Committee of the City Council, but a good deal of the work is voluntary and carried on by adult members of the community.

13. Is a membership fee charged?

A membership fee is usually charged but the amount is not stated.

E. Additional Information.

The following additional information in regard to regulations governing the use of school buildings is appended to the letter.

REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE USE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS.  
(as amended - October 1948)

A. Classification of groups or organisations which may be granted the use of School Buildings.

1. Free Use of School Buildings:

- (a) By the teaching staff or pupils for purpose directly connected with the education of children.
- (b) By groups sponsored by responsible persons or recognised organisations for the training or entertainment of school children.
- (c) For school dances, school concerts or gymnastic displays of pupils attending the schools or anything of a like nature.
- (d) Civic elections, Dominion or Provincial elections
- (e) Home and School Associations or Community Clubs.  
(Except that in cases where an admission fee or charge is made, payment of a permit fee is required equivalent to the cost of caretaking services).

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2. Upon payment of a charge sufficient to reimburse the School District for all expenses incurred in permitting the use of the building:

(a) For all other purposes in which event the permit before being issued shall be approved by the sub-committee on the use of school buildings.

B. Administration.

1. All applicants for the seasonal use of school buildings, grounds and facilities for any activities or purposes under the direction of the School Board be made to the Director of Physical Education
2. All applications from other bodies carrying on recreational activities for seasonal use of school buildings, grounds and facilities be made to the Director of Recreation for the City of Winnipeg.
3. The Director of Physical Education and the Director of Recreation for the City of Winnipeg will confer on applications included in Clause 1 and 2 above and will make recommendations to the Commissioner of Buildings for the issue of permits on the prescribed form at least one week before the building is required.
4. Applications for occasional use of the school buildings, grounds and facilities should be made directly to the Commissioner of Buildings.
5. When deemed advisable, applications shall be referred to the sub-committee on use of school buildings (Chairman of the Board, Chairman of the Building Committee and the Commissioner of Buildings) and if necessary, to the Building Committee.
6. The Board may refuse applications for the use of school buildings in cases where the size of the membership of the group or the prospective attendance does not justify opening the building. This right may also be exercised and the permit cancelled in the case of organisations which have been granted the use of the buildings at stated intervals; if the attendance at the meetings justifies such action. (Minimum attendance of 20 is required).
7. In all cases where fees are charged the fees shall be paid before the permit is issued.
8. The Commissioner of Buildings may, if he deems it advisable, allocate some other school than the one applied for.
9. In cases of emergency special permits may be issued by the Commissioner of Buildings.
10. No permit shall be issued for the use of any school building on a Sunday or for the afternoon of any Saturday except on the authority of the sub-committee on the use of school buildings and the amount of the fee to be paid shall be determined by the said sub-committee.
11. The building Commissioner may refuse to issue a permit subject to the sub-committee.

12. The Director of Physical Education for the schools will at the beginning of September of each year obtain information from the proper parties with regard to the required use of the schools for those activities under the direction of the School Board.
13. No person, including the Principal of the School, shall use a school building or any part thereof, without having first obtained a permit therefor, providing however, the Principal in the discharge of his personal duties shall have the right of access to the school at any time without a permit. A permit will be required if the school is to be used by the Principal for meetings of groups of teachers, pupils, or other persons for any purpose. A Principal using the school without a permit shall assume responsibility for seeing that school doors are properly closed, light switches pulled and shall take such other precautions as may be necessary for the care of school property.
14. If a Principal of a school finds that he needs the use of the school for some important and unforeseen purpose at a time already allotted to an outside group he shall give at least 10 days' notice of his requirements to the Commissioner of Buildings.
15. No admission charge shall be made or a collection of any kind taken unless the intention to make such a charge or to take a collection is disclosed on the application for a permit.
16. No permit shall be issued for the use of any building where dancing is permitted except as herein provided for, or for charitable or other community objects.
17. Permits shall be valid for the dates shown on the permit but all permits shall terminate on August 31st of each year.
18. That upon receiving evidence of any organisation making improper use of school property for the use of which a permit has been granted, the Commissioner of Buildings, after consultation with the permanent committee on the use of school buildings, shall have authority to cancel the permit.
19. All applications shall be made in writing to the proper official.

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