

Victoria school district raising rent for child-care operators ^[1]

More money needed to repair school-based portables because many are 'pretty worn out'

Author:

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

As the B.C. government prepares to roll out its child-care strategy in Tuesday's budget, Victoria's school board is raising the fees it charges out-of-school program operators.

School District 61 plans to increase the rent for portables on school properties by 50 per cent over the next two years. The buildings are used for programs run by range of private and non-profit organizations.

District secretary-treasurer Mark Walsh says schools expect to be involved in the province's expanded child care plans, but the portables used by existing after-school programs are "pretty worn out."

"The difficulty is, of course, that you get capital dollars in year one. By year 20, if you don't put the appropriate operating dollars into something, it's worn out," Walsh told On the Island host Gregor Craigie

"The reason is that we haven't done a good job maintaining them because we haven't had enough funds to do so."

Child-care providers have been mostly supportive of the rent increase, though Walsh said he has heard concerns from parents. However, he said the rental portion of the cost for out-of-school care in the district is "very minor."

Rents on the portables that house existing after-school programs are about \$2.70 per day for each child. Currently, monthly fees range from about \$250 to \$450 a month for each child.

With files from CBC Radio One's On the Island with Gregor Craigie.

[Audio segment accessible online, "On eve of 'affordable' provincial child care launch, Victoria school district raising rent for facility operators"]

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