



DATE: August 14, 2002

TO: Union of BC Municipalities
Member Municipalities and Regional Districts

FROM: District of Wells Mayor and Council

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY RESOLUTION
at 2002-UBCM CONVENTION AND AGM

Dear Friends

School District 28 (Quesnel) recently voted to close the only elementary school in our community. Not only does this threaten the safety of our children, who are being asked to bus 160 km daily and spend up to 2 1/2 hours a day on a bus, but it threatens our community economically.

This closure is being made possible because the Provincial Government is not enforcing its own policy. The written policy around the Small Community Supplement is clear that it is to be used to keep rural schools open. The Ministry of Education is ignoring this and turning a blind eye to School Districts who close rural schools and divert up to \$300,000 per school into 'general revenue'. The Ministry says this gives Boards "greater flexibility". However, these funds were meant to help defray the costs of operating rural schools who do not benefit from the economies of scale found in urban centres.

This disregard of policy is proving very detrimental to many communities in northern and Central BC. Previously, many Boards were operating their rural schools at a profit – the Small Community Grant added to the student per capita grant was more than the cost of operating the school. It is only the ability to shift the entire \$100,000 per school per year into general revenue that has made it profitable to close rural schools.

The District of Wells believes that communities around the North need to send a clear message to Education Minister Clark and the Premier that it is not okay to destroy the fabric of our communities.

Please adopt the attached motion and send a copy to Hon. Christie Clark and to Premier Gordon Campbell and support the resolution at UBCM. Thank you.

Sincerely,

(original signed by Dave Hendrixson, Mayor, District of Wells)

Dave Hendrixson, Mayor

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION
for adoption at the
2002 UBCM Convention and Annual General Meeting

WHEREAS equal opportunity to education is the right of all British Columbians, and rural schools are critical to this right as well as to both the social and the economic fabric of rural communities, and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Education's Small Community Supplement was established with the intent to assist School Districts in maintaining their rural schools and the Ministry of Education has failed to ensure that these funds be spent in support of rural education.

NOW THEREFORE, We, _____,
call upon the Ministry of Education to ensure that the Small Community Supplement is used to keep rural schools open.