

June 3, 2015

Don Morgan, MLA  
Minister of Education  
Suite 109  
3502 Taylor Street East  
Saskatoon, SK S7H 5H9

Good day, Mr. Minister!

I listened to your interview with Leisha Gabrinski on CBC Saskatoon morning radio program Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> regarding developing licensed childcares in Saskatchewan. I was especially interested in your comments that “no daycares were being developed” at about the 2:20 mark of the interview and “that there are no groups ready to take on a daycare” or that “it is a challenge to find people to take it on.”

I am the chair of the Sonechko Ukrainian Bilingual Daycare Inc. proposed to be established at Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School in Saskatoon. This childcare was proposed as a Ukrainian National Federation Saskatoon Branch (UNF-SB) initiative in 2008. Community surveys were completed at that time by the UNF-SB and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Saskatoon Branch (UCC-SB) and the need for a subsidized childcare facility was identified. UNF-SB and UCC-SB partnered in this project in 2010. The ten to twelve member board has met monthly since that time. Sonechko Ukrainian Bilingual Daycare Inc. was incorporated under the Non-Profit Corporations Act of Saskatchewan on August 20, 2012.

The Sonechko Daycare Board has successfully completed the Operations Manual and other manuals required by the Department of Early Learning and Childcare, Ministry of Education, to establish a daycare at Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School. Dialogue has taken place with the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division. The Sonechko Board and the Superintendent of Education have been provided with architectural plans to re-purpose two classrooms. To date, the Board has successfully prepared a Readiness Assessment, Community Needs Assessment, a Request for Proposals, Parent and Employee Manuals, Operations Manual, a website, a logo, held regular monthly meetings, invited guest speakers, visited other daycare facilities, received grants and educational materials, has been in contact with various government/non-government stakeholders including the Department of Education, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, and provincial government officials. As part of the

process of establishing a daycare, the Board of Directors attended enmasse the Basic Board Information For Children Centres in Saskatchewan seminar held in April 2013.

Your comments at approximately 2:29 of your CBC radio interview on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, were that the “capacity to find willing partners there wasn’t sufficient uptake on groups wanting to operate a daycare” is not reflective the Board of Directors of the Sonechko Daycare Project. You also stated subsequently that “so we were approaching community groups, churches, etc. to try to see if they were willing to operate a daycare. So it’s a challenge to try to find people willing to take it on. Everybody acknowledges that there is a need.” The Sonechko Board of Directors received a letter from Lynn Allen, Executive Director, Early Years Branch, Government of Saskatchewan, Ministry of Education, thanking us for our Community Needs Assessment for 2015-2016 and that “given current fiscal challenges, we are unable to allocate new childcare spaces within the 2015-2016 budget.”

Now I realize that you have been provided with information by the Ministry to speak on this issue, but given that our Board is prepared, willing, ready, and able to advance this project, are you able to help us in this regard to achieve our goal and approve the establishment of the Sonechko Ukrainian Bilingual Daycare at Bishop Filevich School. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Roy Papish, D.C.  
Chair  
Sonechko Ukrainian Bilingual Daycare Board of Directors

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