Media Release
For Immediate Release

Tuesday, November 14, 2017

A Message of Inclusivity: All students deserve to reach their full potential in our One Learning Community

VICTORIA, BC – The Greater Victoria School District's Board of Education is sharing a message of inclusivity to ensure that all students feel welcome and supported at school, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Trustees recognize that students trying to express or discover their sexual orientation and gender identity may face a unique set of challenges that can affect a student's well-being. The Board of Education fully supports the new curriculum including Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) lesson plans and wants to ensure our classrooms are fostering healthy conversations about diversity.

"There are many students who are still afraid to share their experiences for fear of harassment, which can negatively impact their overall health and well-being", noted Board Chair Edith Loring-Kuhanga. "We must continue to create a culture where everyone is accepted, where students empower and support one another regardless of their differences or challenges."

In 2016, The Board of Education approved the District's first gender identity and expression policy to create positive learning environments that make all students feel safe, respected and accepted. This led to the introduction of gender inclusive washrooms in every school across our District. Now, every school has identified a safe contact, also known as SOGI lead, who is a resource for schools to help build inclusive spaces.

The District is holding the first training session for school SOGI leads on December 7, 2017. In the spring, the District will also host an evening to educate parents and community partners on how we can support and build an inclusive learning community where all students have an opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

-30-

Media Contact:

Edith Loring-Kuhanga
Board Chair
Greater Victoria School District #61
Mobile: 778.676.2571