The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
Regular Board Meeting
AGENDA

Monday, April 26, 2021, 7:30 p.m.
Broadcasted via YouTube
https://bit.ly/3czx8bA

Pages

A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

This meeting is being audio and video recorded. The video can be viewed on the District website.

A.1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

A.2. Approval of the Agenda

Recommended Motion:
That the April 26, 2021 agenda be approved.

A.3. Approval of the Minutes

a. Approval of the March 29, 2021 Regular Board Minutes 7

Recommended Motion:
That the March 29, 2021 Regular Board Minutes be approved.

b. Approval of the April 13, 2021 Special Board Minutes 27

Recommended Motion:
That the April 13, 2021 Special Board Minutes be approved.

A.4. Business Arising from the Minutes

A.5. Student Achievement

a. Monthly Report

Recommended Motion:
That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) receive the Superintendent's report as presented.

b. 2021-22 School Calendar

Recommended Motion:
That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve the following 2021/2022 school calendar dates:

2021/2022 School Calendar*

School Opening	September 7, 2021
First non-instructional day	September 27, 2021
Thanksgiving	October 11, 2021
Second non-instructional day	October 22, 2021 (Province wide)
Remembrance Day	November 11, 2021
Third non-instructional day	November 12, 2021
Schools close for Winter vacation	December 17, 2021
Schools re-open after Winter vacation	January 4, 2022
Fourth non-instructional day	February 18, 2022
Family Day	February 21, 2022
Schools close for Spring vacation	March 18, 2022
Schools re-open after Spring vacation	April 4, 2022

Good Friday	April 15, 2022
Easter Monday	April 18, 2022
Fifth non-instructional day	May 20, 2022
Victoria Day	May 23, 2022
Administrative Day and School Closing	June 24, 2022

*Sixth non-instructional day to be chosen by each school

c. Communications Update 673

d. Trustee Questions 692

E.2. Secretary-Treasurer's Report

a. Monthly Report 693

Recommended Motion:
That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) receive the Secretary- Treasurer's report as presented.

b. Victoria High School Track

c. Sundance/Bank Street: Update

d. 2021-2022 Budget Update

F. QUESTION PERIOD

(15 minutes total)

G. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF IN-CAMERA ITEMS

G.1. Record of In-Camera Board of Education Meeting - March 29, 2020 694

G.2. Record of Special In-Camera Board of Education Meeting - April 6, 2021 695

G.3. Record of Special In-Camera Board of Education Meeting - April 19, 2021 696

H. NEW BUSINESS/NOTICE OF MOTIONS

H.1. New Business

a. Trustee Paynter - FY 2021-/22 Budget Process

Recommended Motion:
That the Board of Education of Greater Victoria (School District 61) direct the Superintendent immediately schedule public meetings of the Board to enable the board and district administration to collaboratively develop an annual budget based on the 2020/21 budget allocations through the review of all district (by department) and school level allocations at to include both proposed operating and special purpose funds.

- District department leads and school principals will be expected to submit reports in advance to the Board on resource allocations and expenditures for the past 3 years and rationales for any proposed change in resourcing to be considered in the FY 21/22 budget.
- Meeting topics will be posted in advance to allow for public presentations specific to the agenda topic.
- Meetings schedules will be coordinated to enable the review to be completed, budget proposal finalized and Board bylaw to be passed by May 17, 2021.

H.2. Notice of Motions

I. ADJOURNMENT

Recommended Motion:
That the meeting be adjourned.

The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)

MINUTES

March 29, 2021, 7:30 p.m.

Trustees Present: Jordan Watters, Board Chair, Elaine Leonard, Vice-Chair, Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze , Diane McNally, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter, Ann Whiteaker

Administration: Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent, Katrina Stride, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Chuck Morris, Director, Facilities Services, Andy Canty, Director, Information Technology for Learning, Lisa McPhail, Communications and Community Engagement Manager , Vicki Hanley, Recorder

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A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m.

A.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

Chair Watters recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn and we do our work.

Chair Watters provided the email address for question period.

Chair Watters provided a formal apology to the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations for the disrespectful behavior exhibited at the March 1, 2021 Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting.

A.2 Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Duncan
Seconded by Trustee McNally

That the March 29, 2021 agenda be approved with the following addition:

B. Correspondence

B.12 March 1, 2021 letter from Songhees Nation Chief and Council to Board Chair

B.13 March 11, 2021 letter from GVTA to Trustees

Motion Carried Unanimously

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee Duncan

That the March 29, 2021 agenda be approved with the following addition:

B. Correspondence

B.14 March 11, 2021 letter from VCPAC to Trustees

Motion Carried Unanimously

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the March 29, 2021 agenda be approved with the following amendment:

E.2.b 2021-2022 Annual Budget moved to B.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Moved by Trustee Painter
Seconded by Trustee McNally

That the March 29, 2021 agenda be approved with the following addition:

D.2 Trustee Reports'

D.2.e Trustee Painter - BCSTA Representative Report

Motion Carried Unanimously

Moved by Trustee Hentze
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

That the March 29, 2021 agenda be approved, as amended.

Motion Carried Unanimously

A.3 Approval of the Minutes

a. Approval of the February 22, 2021 Regular Board Minutes

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the February 22, 2021 Regular Board Minutes be approved.

Motion Carried

b. Approval of the February 25, 2021 Special Board Minutes

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the February 25, 2021 Special Board Minutes be approved.

Motion Carried

A.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

None

A.5 Student Achievement

None

A.6 District Presentations

None

A.7 Community Presentations

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) extend the allotted presentation time of speaker, Edith Loring-Kuhanga, from five minutes to ten minutes.

Motion Carried Unanimously

a. Edith Loring-Kuhanga, Craigflower School Closure Public Consultation

Edith Loring-Kuhanga, former SD61 Trustee, attended the meeting via conference phone to speak to Trustees about the disrespect to the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations at the March 1, 2021 Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting.

B. 2021-2022 Annual Budget

Secretary-Treasurer Morris presented Draft 2 of the proposed 2021-2022 annual budget and proceeded to explain the $7.1 million shortfall facing the District. Secretary-Treasurer provided Trustees the timeline for the budget process and upcoming information meetings and special board meetings to receive feedback from the public. Discussion ensued amongst the Trustees with questions of clarification being asked of Secretary-Treasurer Morris.

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) 2021-2022 Annual Budget Bylaw in the amount of $258,131,762 be:

Read a first time the 29th day of March, 2021.

For (6): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (3): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, and Trustee Paynter

Motion Carried (6 to 3)

C. CORRESPONDENCE

C.1 February 15, 2021, Doncaster PAC to SD61, Strings Program

C.2 February 21, 2021, SD5 to Ministry of Education, COVID Vaccine for Staff

C.3 February 24, 2021, SD61 to VCPAC, Response re Board Bylaw 9330.1, Appeals Process

C.4 February 24, 2021, SD61 to VCPAC, Response to Feb 17, 2021 Letter re Invite to Meetings

C.5 February 25, 2021, SD61 to Minister of Education and Minister of Finance, Net Zero Capital Project Funding

C.6 March 1, 2021, MOE to SD61, Gender Data Collection in MyEducation BC

C.7 March 1, 2021, SD69 to BCSTA, Letter of Support re School Life Cycle Funding

C.8 March 3, 2021, BCSTA to Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, COVID Vaccine Priority

C.9 March 9, 2021, Minister of Education to SD69, Child Care

C.10 March 12, 2021, SD61 Teacher, Matt Christie to Trustees, Racism

C.11 March 16, 2021, SD57 to Minister of Health and Minister of Education, Immunization Plan

C.12 March 1, 2021, Songhees Nation Chief and Council to Board Chair

Discussion ensued with regards to the letter received from Songhees Nation Chief and Council, with a recommendation being made to remove it from the agenda until clarification can be sought from the Nation on whether they want it to be included on a public agenda.

Moved by Trustee Painter
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) reconsider adding the March 1, 2021 letter received from Songhees Chief and Council to Board Chair Watters, until such time as a confirmation is received from the Songhees Nation on whether they give permission to include the letter on a public agenda.

Motion Carried Unanimously

C.13 March 11, 2021, GVTA to Trustees

C.14 March 11, 2021, VCPAC to Trustees

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

Be it resolved that Trustees send their expression of interest to attend a meeting on March 31, 2021 between VCPAC Executive and School

District No. 61 Trustees to Chair Watters and Chair Watters will select third Trustees who will attend along with herself and Vice-Chair Leonard.

Motion Carried Unanimously

D. TRUSTEE REPORTS

D.1 Chair's Report

a. Chair's Report

Chair Watters provided a handout of her report and provided highlights. The report will be posted on the district website for the public.

b. Annual Workplan: April

Chair Watters presented for information, the Board Work Plan for April 2021.

D.2 Trustees' Reports

a. Trustee Hentze

Trustee Hentze presented her report for the George Jay Naming Committee and stated that the Terms of Reference will be brought to the April Operations Policy and Planning Committee.

b. Trustee Paynter

Trustee Paynter provided a verbal report and advised that he would be resigning as Chair of the Audit Committee.

c. Trustee McNally

Trustee McNally provided her representative report for the Indigenous Nations Education Council and highlighted what she is currently reading.

d. Trustee Duncan

Trustee Duncan reported that the Police Liaison Ad Hoc Committee is currently seeking feedback for experiences that people wish to share with respect to their interaction with community police officers. Trustee Duncan further stated the professional development opportunities she has been involved in.

e. Trustee Painter

Trustee Painter stated that he shared via email his BCSTA Report from the February Provincial Council meeting with Trustees and advised that the motions submitted by SD61 Trustees have gone to BCSTA AGM for consideration.

E. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

E.1 Education Policy and Directions Committee

a. Draft minutes from the March 1, 2021 meeting

The draft minutes from the March 1, 2021 Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting were provided for information.

E.2 Operations Policy and Planning Committee

a. Draft minutes from the March 8, 2021 meeting

The draft minutes from the March 8, 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting were provided for information.

b. Recommended motions from the March 8, 2021 meeting

a. Craigflower School Closure Public Consultation

Moved by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) suspend the Craigflower School Closure public consultation plan timeline and direct the Superintendent to meet with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to discuss how they would like to proceed.

Discussion ensued amongst Trustees with feedback being provided by stakeholders and Superintendent Green.

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee McNally
Seconded by Trustee Whiteaker

That the motion "*That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) suspend the Craigflower School Closure public consultation plan timeline and direct the Superintendent to meet with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to discuss how they would like to proceed*" be amended to strike "*Superintendent to meet with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to discuss*" and

replace with "*Chair and Vice-Chair to write to the Chiefs and Councils of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations expressing the Board's willingness to meet to listen to the Nations on the Nations' terms, regarding their vision for the future of the Shoreline and Craigflower buildings, and the Nations' vision for education on those sites.*

For (3): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, and Trustee Paynter

Against (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Abstain (1): Trustee Whiteaker

Motion Defeated (3 to 5)

Further discussion ensued amongst Trustees with a recommendation being made to amend the motion.

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee Duncan
Seconded by Trustee Paynter

That the motion *"That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) suspend the Craigflower School Closure public consultation plan timeline and direct the Superintendent to meet with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to discuss how they would like to proceed"* be amended to include the words " and *Shoreline School*" after Craigflower School.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Chair Watters called for the vote on the main motion as amended.

Moved by

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) suspend the Craigflower School and Shoreline School Closure public consultation plan timeline and direct the Superintendent to meet with the Songhees

and Esquimalt Nations to discuss how they would like to proceed.

For (7): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (1): Trustee Paynter

Abstain (1): Trustee McNally

Motion Carried (7 to 1)

b. Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee - Terms of Reference

Moved by

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve the Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee Terms of Reference, as amended.

For (8): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee McNally, Trustee Painter, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Abstain (1): Trustee Duncan

Motion Carried (8 to 0)

c. Standing Committees - Public Participation

Moved by

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to implement a process to allow active public participation in all standing committees as per our bylaws while meetings are conducted under COVID 19 health and safety guidelines for April 2021 Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting.

Motion Carried Unanimously

E.3 Draft Bylaw 9360, General Meeting of the Board

Trustee Whiteaker stated that she had several amendments to suggest with regards to Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*. Chair Watters advised that Trustees would go through and vote for each suggested amendment separately.

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee McNally

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*, under point #6:

6. The first will encompass the agenda, minutes, **correspondence**, and acceptance of presentations from the public and employee groups;

Motion Carried Unanimously

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee Duncan

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*, under point #6:

6. * Individuals or delegations wishing to make a presentation will be advised of their placement on an upcoming agenda on the ~~Wednesday~~ **Friday** before the Regular meeting. Presentations on behalf of groups will be presentation by the spokesperson(s) of that group, who will be identified on the agenda.

For (1): Trustee Whiteaker

Against (6): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, and Trustee Paynter

Abstain (2): Trustee Duncan, and Trustee McNally

Motion Defeated (1 to 6)

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee McNally

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board,* under point #9:

9. All agendas will be prepared by the Chair of the Board, and circulated by the Chair or designate. Proposed agenda items will be provided to the

Secretary-Treasurer no later than the ~~Tuesday~~ **noon Wednesday** before the meeting.

For (4): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Motion Defeated (4 to 5)

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee Duncan

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*, under point #7:

7. The public will be encouraged to attend the Education Policy and Directions, or the Operations Policy and Planning Standing Committee meetings, ~~in order to~~ **rather than a Board meeting, to** facilitate dialogue with the public before decisions are made.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee McNally

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*, under point #8:

8. In the event that the Board may fail to conclude the business of the agenda by the time of adjournment the Chair may ask the board to prioritize the remaining agenda items. Agenda items not concluded at the meeting, will be placed on the next month's agenda, **and given priority to occur before new business.**

For (4): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (3): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, and Trustee Ferris

Abstain (2): Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Motion Carried (4 to 3)

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee McNally

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*, under point #12:

12. An electronic copy of the General Meeting Agenda shall will be made available to the media, partner groups and the public (website) through the Secretary-Treasurer's office on the day after copies are delivered to trustees, and such Agenda shall have attached the Committee Reports. three days before the meeting.

For (4): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Motion Defeated (4 to 5)

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee McNally

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*, under point #15:

15. With the exception of poll votes pursuant to Bylaw 9011, and electronic meetings called by the Chair, the Board will not conduct meetings electronically. For the purposes of this bylaw, electronic communications that would constitute a meeting include communications shared among all trustees that materially advance ~~or debate a~~ **the debate on any** matter before the Board. This Bylaw does not prohibit the electronic provision of information pertaining to a matter before the Board.

For (2): Trustee McNally, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (6): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, and Trustee Paynter

Abstain (1): Trustee Duncan

Motion Defeated (2 to 6)

Moved by Trustee Painter
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

Be it resolved that only ten more minutes is spent on discussing and amending Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board.*

Motion Carried

Moved by Trustee McNally
Seconded by Trustee Whiteaker

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*, under point #4:

4. The Chair, the Secretary-Treasurer or any three trustees, may call a special ~~or extra-ordinary~~ meeting of the Board, in addition to the regularly scheduled general meetings of the Board.

For (7): Trustee Watters, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (1): Trustee Leonard

Abstain (1): Trustee Painter

Motion Carried (7 to 1)

Moved by Trustee McNally
Seconded by Trustee Duncan

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) amend Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board*, under point #7:

7. In addition to the opportunities to participate at Standing Committees, the Board Chair will ask partner groups including the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association (GVTA), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE Locals 947 and 382), the Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (VCPAC), Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, Student Representatives, and the Victoria Principals and Vice-Principals Association (VPVPA), whether they would like to provide comment on motions ~~prior to them being debated by the Board~~ **after the rationale has been presented by the mover**. Each stakeholder representative will have up to two minutes to provide comment through the Chair.

For (4): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Motion Defeated (4 to 5)

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve revised Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board,* as amended.

For (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Against (4): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Motion Carried (5 to 4)

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) agree to give all three readings to revised Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board* at the meeting of March 29, 2021.

Motion to be Carried Unanimously

For (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Against (4): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Motion Defeated (5 to 4)

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That Bylaw 9360, *General Meeting of the Board* be:

Read a first time the 29th day of March, 2021.

For (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Against (4): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Motion Carried (5 to 4)

E.4 Recess

Moved by Trustee Painter
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) recess for five minutes from 10:41 p.m. to 10:46 p.m.

Motion Carried Unanimously

F. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORTS

F.1 Superintendent's Report

a. Monthly Report

Superintendent Green provided the report for information.

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) receive the Superintendent's report as presented.

For (7): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, and Trustee Paynter

Abstain (2): Trustee McNally, and Trustee Whiteaker

Motion Carried (7 to 0)

b. Trustee Questions

Trustee Paynter requested an update with respect to the information he requested regarding the Victoria High School track. Secretary-Treasurer Morris advised that the information has not

been gathered yet and requested one more month to provide that to Trustees.

F.2 Secretary-Treasurer's Report

a. Monthly Report

Secretary-Treasurer Morris provided the report and answered questions of clarification.

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) receive the Secretary- Treasurer's report as presented.

For (8): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Abstain (1): Trustee McNally

Motion Carried (8 to 0)

b. Lansdowne Land Disposal Public Engagement Plan

Secretary-Treasurer Morris presented a timeline for the public engagement process for the Lansdowne Middle School land disposal. Discussion ensued amongst the Trustees with questions of clarification being asked of Secretary-Treasurer Morris.

Moved by Trustee Painter
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve the public engagement plan to consult on the disposal of 7.3 acres at Lansdowne Middle School site, as presented.

For (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Against (3): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, and Trustee Paynter

Abstain (1): Trustee Whiteaker

Motion Carried (5 to 3)

c. Motion to Extend Meeting

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) extend the meeting time past 11:00 p.m.

For (7): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Painter, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Abstain (2): Trustee Hentze, and Trustee McNally

Motion Carried (7 to 0)

d. Annual Five-Year Capital Plan Submission for 2021/22 - Ministry of Education Response

Secretary-Treasurer Morris presented the responses provided to the Ministry of Education for the District Annual Five Year Capital Plan submission for 2021-22. Discussion ensued amongst the Trustees with questions of clarification being asked of Secretary-Treasurer Morris.

G. QUESTION PERIOD

Q. Could Trustee Paynter elaborate on the investigative role taken away from the Audit Committee?

A. Trustee Paynter advised that he would provide a written report and explanation for the April 26, 2021 Board meeting agenda.

H. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF IN-CAMERA ITEMS

H.1 Record of In-Camera Board of Education Meeting - February 22, 2020

H.2 Record of Special In-Camera Board of Education Meeting - March 4, 2021

H.3 Record of Special In-Camera Board of Education Meeting - March 11, 2021

I. NEW BUSINESS/NOTICE OF MOTIONS

I.1 New Business

a. Policy Sub-Committee - Trustee Whiteaker

Trustee Whiteaker presented the motion and rationale.

Moved by Trustee Painter
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Chair to call the question.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker
Seconded by Trustee McNally

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) suspend the work of the Policy Sub-Committee until the Board has had an opportunity to review and debate the “Review of SD 61 Policies” as presented to the Operations Policy and Planning Committee for information on November 9, 2020 and approve, amend or reject the plan.

For (4): Trustee Duncan, Trustee McNally, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (5): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, and Trustee Painter

Motion Defeated (4 to 5)

b. Before and After School Child Care - Trustee McNally

Trustee McNally requested that the motion be tabled to the October 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting as per the March 8, 2021 OPPS meeting.

Moved by Trustee McNally
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

That the motion "*That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to staff early child care / child care before and after school programs with first consideration to CUPE 947 members who apply for the positions.*

AND FURTHER;

That CUPE 947 EAs immediately / as soon as possible be offered the positions at their current hourly wage before wide advertisement or SD61staff contracting with other community provider(s)" be tabled until October 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting.

Motion Carried Unanimously

c. Letter to Dr. Henry re Mask Mandate - Trustee McNally

Trustee McNally presented the motion and rationale.

Moved by Trustee McNally
Seconded by Trustee Whiteaker

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Board Chair to write a letter to Dr. Henry expressing support for a broadened mask mandate for schools that includes mask wearing by students K-12, staff, and any adults in school buildings in all school spaces, with exceptions on a case by case basis to be made by principals, with a documented reason for an exemption.

Trustees discussed the motion and current mandates and Trustee McNally withdrew the motion.

I.2 Notice of Motions

None

J. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:29 p.m.

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the meeting be adjourned.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer

The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)

MINUTES

April 13, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Trustees Present: Jordan Watters, Board Chair, Elaine Leonard, Vice-Chair, Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze , Diane McNally, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter, Ann Whiteaker

Administration: Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent, Katrina Stride, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Andy Canty, Director, Learning for Information Technology, Julie Lutner, Director of Finance, Financial Services, Lisa McPhail, Communications and Community Engagement Manager , Vicki Hanley, Recorder

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A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

A.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

Chair Watters recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

A.2 Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Ferris

That the April 13, 2021 agenda be approved.

For (8): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Abstain (1): Trustee McNally

Motion Carried (8 to 0)

B. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

B.1 Cheryl McKinnon, SD61 Parent

Cheryl McKinnon attended the meeting to speak to Trustees about the District music programs and how they have impacted her family. Ms. McKinnon urged Trustees to reconsider cutting programs in the 2021-2022 budget process.

B.2 Cindy Romphf, SD61 Teacher

Cindy Romphf, a music teacher at Cedar Hill Middle School, attended the meeting to speak to Trustees about the importance of music in the middle school years and implored Trustees to re-think cutting music and strings programs from the District.

B.3 Noelle Davis, Braefoot Elementary PAC Member

Noelle Davis, a Braefoot Elementary PAC member, attended the meeting to speak against cuts to music, strings and band programs in elementary and middle schools in the District.

B.4 Caitlin Davies, SD61 Parent

Caitlin Davies, a parent with students attending school in the District, attended the meeting to speak in favour of the music, strings and band programs and urged Trustees against cutting these programs.

B.5 Elin Kelsey, Island Ukuleles

Elin Kelsey attended the meeting on behalf of Island Ukuleles to speak to Trustees about the program and how it has impacted Greater Victoria students over many years. Ms. Kelsey urged Trustees to reconsider cutting music and strings programs during the budget process.

B.6 Jessie Swan, SD61 Student

Jessie Swan, a grade 8 student at Cedar Hill Middle School, attended the meeting to speak to Trustees about her experience in the music program and how it has benefited her.

C. 2021-2022 ANNUAL BUDGET

C.1 2021-2022 Budget Presentation

Chair Watters thanked all community speakers for attending and presenting to the Board.

Superintendent Green reiterated her thanks to all speakers and stated that this budget process is going to be very difficult for staff and trustees, with many tough decisions to be made in order to balance the budget.

Secretary-Treasurer Morris presented Draft 3 of the 2021-2022 annual budget and proceeded to explain the $7.1 million deficit facing the District. Secretary-Treasurer Morris provided Trustees with staff recommendations and ways in which to mitigate the deficit in order to submit a balanced budget to the Ministry, as per the *School Act.* The presentation focused on the main tenent's of the budget: alignment to the learning needs of students through the strategic plan, operational plan and school growth plan, and living within district means.

Discussion ensued with questions being asked of Secretary-Treasurer Morris from Stakeholders and Trustees.

C.2 Recess

The meeting recessed at 7:35 p.m.

Moved by Trustee Ferris
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) break for a short recess.

For (7): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee McNally, and Trustee Painter

Against (2): Trustee Paynter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Motion Carried (7 to 2)

Chair Watters called the meeting back in session at 7:37 p.m.

C.3 Motions to Rescind

a. September 2016 - Learning Resources

Secretary-Treasurer Morris explained to Trustees that it was staff recommendation to rescind the following motions in an effort to use this unspent money on the 2021-2022 budget deficit. Discussion ensued amongst the Trustees with questions of clarification being asked of Secretary-Treasurer Morris.

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Ferris

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) rescind the unspent $242,137 of the $500,000 commitment in the following motion that was carried at the September 26, 2016 Regular Board of Education meeting:

"That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve $500,000 of the June 30, 2016 unrestricted operating surplus of $4,641,593 (Note E) to provide learning resources to support the new curriculum."

For (7): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (2): Trustee McNally, and Trustee Paynter

Motion Carried (7 to 2)

b. September 2017 - Library Support

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Ferris

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) rescind the the unspent $31,980 of the $100,000 commitment in the following motion that was carried at the September 25, 2017 Regular Board of Education meeting:

"That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve $100,000 of the June 30, 2017 unrestricted operating surplus of $3,774,594 (Note E) to provide district-wide library support."

For (7): Trustee Watters, Trustee Leonard, Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, Trustee Hentze, Trustee Painter, and Trustee Whiteaker

Against (2): Trustee McNally, and Trustee Paynter

Motion Carried (7 to 2)

C.4 2021-2022 Annual Budget

Chair Watters advised Trustees that the 2nd reading of the 2021-2022 Annual Budget Bylaw will be placed on the floor until the Board of Education meeting of May 17, 2021, at which time debate and voting will take place.

Moved by Trustee Leonard
Seconded by Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) place the 2nd reading of the 2021-2022 Annual Budget Bylaw in the amount of $252,049,842 on the floor until May 17, 2021.

D. NEW BUSINESS/NOTICE OF MOTIONS

D.1 New Business

None

D.2 Notice of Motions

a. Trustee Paynter - April 26th 2021 Board of Education Agenda

Trustee Paynter provided a Notice of Motion for the April 26, 2021 Board of Education to suspend the current budget process and convert the 2021-2022 budget to a rollover budget with adjustment for enrolment.

E. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Moved by Trustee Painter
Seconded by Trustee Leonard

That the meeting be adjourned.

Motion Carried

Chair	Secretary-Treasurer

BCSTA British Columbia School Trustees Association

March 31, 2021

The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Whiteside,

Subject: School Life Cycle Funding

On behalf of British Columbia's boards of education, please accept the attached report titled "The Case for Increased School Life Cycle Funding."

This paper was written by BCSTA's Capital Working Group with input from every board of education in B.C. The report, endorsed by our board of directors, focuses on the province-wide need to address steadily increasing levels of deferred life cycle maintenance.

Due to a lack of adequate funding for building maintenance, boards of education are currently unable to maintain consistent regular maintenance on school buildings. The implications of this have been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regular maintenance for facilities is critical to providing safe, efficient learning environments for children and that this can be best achieved with adequate annual funding.

BCSTA's board of directors looks forward to discussing the report with you at a future date, and we thank you for your consideration of this important area of concern.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Higginson
President
British Columbia School Trustees Association

Enclosure: Report: The Case for Increased School Life Cycle Funding

CC: Scott MacDonald, Deputy Minister
BCSTA member boards of education

www.bcsta.org t 604 734 2721 4th Floor - 1580 W. Broadway
bcsta@bcsta.org f 604 732 4559 Vancouver, BC V6J 5K9

Chilliwack School District

April 1, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
PO Box 9010 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Ministers Whiteside and Farnworth:

Currently, inmates in Provincial Correctional Centres have access to Continuing Education programs when there is an agreement in place with a local school district. The Ministry of Education currently allocates funding for these programs to school districts based on the funding model for Continuing Education. This results in instability in funding and presents a threat to the continuity of service. The Chilliwack School District has one such arrangement with the Ford Mountain Correctional Centre.

The Continuing Education program at Ford Mountain is currently attached to Kwíyeqel Secondary School and has one district staff member. Since 2011, the program at Ford Mountain has been funded by Chilliwack School District operating dollars and has cost the district an additional $303,000 to maintain, plus overhead costs.

As you are aware, there is a direct link between low literacy rates and high incidents of crime. We know that partnerships between school districts and correctional facilities have great value in that they provide disadvantaged individuals with necessary life skills as well as helping to decrease criminal activity in BC communities.

The Funding Model Working Group Implementation Report for Adult and Continuing Education recognized the precariousness of the current funding model for these Continuing Education programs, acknowledging that recommendation 11 of the K-12 Public Education Funding Review, “may not provide enough support for unique or small programs (e.g., Programs in [provincial] correctional centres).” The working group report recommended possible mitigation strategies, including targeted funding for indigenous adult learners and moving away from the course-based funding to a more stable program-based funding model.

The Chilliwack Board of Education requests that the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General allocate sustained special purpose funding to provide year-round educational services in correctional facilities being supported by public school districts. A commitment from government to provide year-round educational services would

Chilliwack
School District

make it possible for us to continue to provide potential life and community changing educational opportunities.

I would like to close with some inspiring words from a former Ford Mountain student named Troy who spoke at our public Board Meeting on January 14, 2020: “I remember never feeling like I was stuck…every course was a good challenge…math was all of a sudden a strong suit for me…never in my entire life did I think I would be sitting, laughing, figuring things out.” Troy graduated at Ford Mountain and went on to enrol in the University of the Fraser Valley.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Willow Reichelt
Chair – Board of Education
Chilliwack School District #33

C: Mr. Dan Coulter, M.L.A., Chilliwack
Ms. Kelli Paddon, M.L.A., Chilliwack-Kent
All Boards of Education c/o the BC School Trustees Association
Mr. Rohan Arul-pragasam, Interim Superintendent Chilliwack School District
Mr. Gerry Slykhuis, Secretary Treasurer Chilliwack School District

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Middle School Music Programs at Cedar Hill
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:08:59 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Benjamin Frank
Sent: Saturday, April 10, 2021 7:56 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Middle School Music Programs at Cedar Hill

PS: Regarding my message below, please include it in the board meeting agenda package.

Thank you so much

From Benjamin Frank

Sent from a Benjamin's I-Phone

On Apr 10, 2021, at 7:05 PM, Benjamin Frank wrote:

To whom it may concern,
My name is Benjamin Frank, I go by the pronouns, He, Him. I'm in seventh grade and music is my life. I don't think I could handle a closure of the middle school music programs. When I get up in the morning I think about choir after school, and how I can sing with my friends. I am also in band, I play the electric bass. I only started this year, and every day during school I look forward to too band and making music with my friends.
I'm also in the school stings group. I've been playing the violin now for three years, and I'm only now really getting the hang of it. I enjoy every minute of our strings class, music is my life.
Last year before Covid-19 was ever around, I was in all choirs. Cantare, Vocal Jazz, Concert Choir. You name it I was in it. Except for one choir, Show Choir. Lately I've really found interest in musical theatre and regret not joining it while I could. I was planning on joining this year but Covid hit. I have been looking forward to joining next year. I was really looking forward to it.

If you go through with this plan you will crush the souls of many children in AND who are thinking of and looking forward to joining the music programs. You ABSOLUTELY NEED to keep the music program open. I BEG of you people. My amazing and inspiring teachers also have families if you lay them off, then what will happen to them? You will most likely doom their families. And what about all of their talent? Shouldn't it go into making us students better people? You want to save money, right? Then sure save your money. Go and ruin the steady and stable lives of the teachers. You think you're helping. I. DON'T. THINK. SO. I firmly disagree with your idea to cut the funding to the music programs at middle school.
This is all I have to say. Make the right decision.
From Benjamin Frank

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Middle School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:07:56 PM
Attachments: image001.gif

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Diego Frank
Sent: Saturday, April 10, 2021 7:56 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Middle School Music Programs

Ps. Regarding my message below please include it in the board meeting agenda package.
.
Diego Frank

On Apr 10, 2021, at 10:11, Diego Frank wrote:

<image001.gif>
To whom it may concern:

I am the father of both a 5th and 7th grader in the Greater Victoria school district. I found out last night that the school board has a forecasted deficit of 7 million for the 21/22 school year and is trying to reconcile that deficit by cutting the music programs offered. I am writing you because I vehemently disagree with this proposal.

Both my sons have taken advantage of the strings programs offered in 5th grade and my older son has taken advantage of all the music programs in middle school by actively participating in 5 different choirs, the strings program, and band. For both my sons, these programs represent the most important part of their day.

Since the pandemic started, kids have been the ones to get the least support from our government. Last school year was cut short and they were offered less than par online learning that amounted to Khan Academy tutorials. This school year they have been deprived of their regular social interactions, all after school sports, some music programs and of course school trips. Online education is still subpar and therefore affects in-class instruction. When will our kids catch a break?

There is optimism in the air with the rollout of vaccines. Next school year was meant to be a return to almost normal. Now, instead it looks to be bleaker year than even before. While adults return to their normal lives and work, enjoying tax breaks and government financial support, our kids will pay the price. Their mental health is on the line, their education is on the line and their inspirations and aspirations are being squashed. Cutting the music programs will send them the worst message possible; that their education, health and aspirations are less important than everyone else's and that those teachers who inspire them daily are the least important of all those that inspire them. I would argue that this is the opposite message that we ought to be sending.

Coming out of this pandemic, our students need to know that they will be supported to catch up on lost time, to be brought back up after so much time being down, and that they can still be and become who they always dreamed of. We as parents, their teachers, and you, the School Board Trustees, Superintendent and Associate Superintendent, are here solely to keep our kids learning and dreaming, aspiring to be the best that they can. Cutting the music program will cut many kids off from their aspirations with music. Many parent, like myself, cannot afford my children the opportunity of private music lessons. Heck, this year we can hardly afford many of the little things that make our kids life exactly that, a kids life. I want and need my taxes to be directed at the music program at the schools. It means everything to this family.

Sincerely,
Diego Frank

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Keep music in Middle Schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:14:24 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Bruce & Karin Kwan **Sent:** Saturday, April 10, 2021 9:44 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Keep music in Middle Schools

***please include my letter in the Board meeting agenda package ***

Dear Ms. Watters,

It is with great concern that I am writing this letter regarding the proposed cuts to the Greater Victoria School District's Middle School Music Education Program for the coming

2021/2022 school year.

As someone who has worked in the accounting industry for the past 12 years, I understand that budgets must be balanced and a deficit such as our District's requires action. I believe that the Greater Victoria School District's Board of Education has not come to this decision lightly. You may believe that cutting funding to this essential program is the only solution. While I respect that this has been a difficult decision, moving forward with this funding cut will have catastrophic repercussions on not just Middle Schools, but an entire future generation.

I *could* tell you how my, now 16 year old, daughter approached grade 6 with a sense of anxiety and uncontrollable emotions (emerging as behavioral issues) and finished grade 6 with a responsibility for herself and a completely transformed self-worth. Or how her grades went from consistently mostly C's (with a couple of B's) to straight A's. I *could* mention that my youngest daughter, now currently in grade 6, has drawn into herself and has trouble sleeping from the news that her beloved music classes will be taken from her. I *could* go on to tell you that my kids along with many of their friends have discovered music as a way to help ease anxiety during the current pandemic.

However, what I would *really* like to talk about is the **future**.

I think we can agree that one thing all stakeholders in the school system have in common is a concern and responsibility for the future of the next generation. Parents worry about their children's future. Teacher's feel a responsibility for their students' future. You, as a school board Trustee, work to safeguard the Greater Victoria School District's Student Body's future.

Recently, I read a very interesting opinion piece from Dr. Spencer Kagan about how Bloom's Taxonomy relates to brain science. Don't worry, I won't go into the boring details but one point still resonates with me. "Most students entering school today will work in job categories not yet created and all will work with technology not yet invented…as educators, we have the daunting task of preparing students for a world we can only dimly imagine." (https://www.kaganonline.com/free_articles/dr_spencer_kagan/289/Rethinking-Thinking-Does-Bloom-s-Taxonomy-Align-with-Brain-Science). Can it get any more daunting than that?! How do we as parents, educators and administrators prepare our kids/students for a future that hasn't even been invented yet? Well, the simple and yet complicated answer is, we instill critical thinking skills in the next generation.

How do we instill critical thinking skills in the next generation? Studies have shown that using both hemispheres of the brain enhance skills in understanding, analyzing, applying, evaluating, and creating. All of these represent critical thinking skills. I don't think I have to tell you that music education has been proven to stimulate both the right and left sides of

the brain.

If we know that critical thinking skills are essential to the future of our kids, how do we justify cuts to one of the few programs that promotes this? Shouldn't the Board's thought process be to **build** programs such as these instead of cutting them? Surely we should be looking to incorporate more activities into our curriculum that stimulate creativity in our future generation?

Many recent studies have shown that music has a positive effect on academic achievement, behavior and mental health. Why aren't we turning to Music Education to **help** with other prevalent issues in our district such as mental health and support for individuals with learning difficulties?

Much of our province's indigenous history has been passed down to generations through song and dance. Music Education has a strong link to the rich cultural heritage in Canada. Are we willing to lose this in our schools? Are we willing to risk sending the message that teaching culture through music isn't important to our district?

It certainly feels like the Greater Victoria School District is on a precipice. We have the opportunity to collaborate and do something great for our future generation. It is disappointing to see that the Board has chosen the status quo over an opportunity to change and adapt. As role models, you are showing our students it is easier to follow what's always been done (***cutting*** funding), rather than "thinking outside of the box" (such as integrating areas to ***save*** money).

I have confidence that if we work together, we can find a compromise that keeps Music Education in our Middle Schools, a program that is an integral part of our kids'/students' present and future. I respectfully ask you to *please reconsider your decision* to cut this program.

Karin Kwan

Parent of:
Jaydon Kwan, 2020 Reynolds Secondary graduate
Julianna Kwan, Reynolds Secondary School, grade 11
Madi Kwan, Cedar Hill Middle School, grade 8
Emily Kwan, Cedar Hill Middle School, grade 6

April 10, 2021

Re: Budget Cuts - Music

To: Superintendent of Schools Shelley Green and Associate Superintendent Harold Caldwell and Board of Trustees

School District 61

My twelve year-old daughter attends Cedar Hill Middle School in Grade 7. She has been attending since Grade 6 from Doncaster Elementary School and we are eager to experience Grade 8 at Cedar Hill Middle School next year.

What has us so engaged and eager? The music program! The hope that the pandemic will be better contained and the music program can once again spread it's wings and continue to do what it does so well…creatively enrich students academic years with unique musical experiences that provide bottomless developmental and emotional growth that has become essential to everyday life at school.

Music is the best part of my daughter's week. The days she has band and choir, she comes home excited to talk about what she is learning in her band and choir pods. She is happy, joyful and delightfully chatty about her school-based music classes. She is relaxed. She is in a beautiful, open space ready to embrace new learnings and eager to share her learnings with others.

She brings home child-like wonder when she talks about the new jazz band song and carries a strong sense of pride when she mentions the complicated clarinet part she has been assigned. She often chooses her school music when she sits in her room practicing the latest choir song even though she is on "downtime". She is not on YouTube browsing mindless materials, she is searching out the music she has been exposed to through school, the songs and pieces so carefully selected by her very experienced, exceptionally passionate and creative music teachers. She opens up her band folder to play for me the parts she is working on and she grabs her tablet to practice her choir songs. She asks me how her music sounds and she welcomes me into her world of learning. She extends an invitation into her musical journey. She is keenly engaged and so proud to share her passion and experiences of school enriched music at home.

My daughter feels an incredibly strong sense of belonging within her band and choir classes and I can see how much her confidence has grown. The Cedar Hill Music Program is "home". It is exploration, comfort, consistency, creativity, passion and an opportunity to express herself in times of change and transition. It is fun. It is a rich learning environment. It is strength. It is self-esteem building.

My daughter is not a strong academic when you look at her overall letter grades. However, when she sees her music grades, she feels a sense of accomplishment and balance. She loves school but most of all she loves music at school.

My daughter needed the exposure to music that school has provided. In elementary school she tried violin in Grade 5 at Doncaster Elementary School. She loved her strings teacher but violin was not easy for her in the context of one class a week. So she decided to try band when she moved to middle school as there was so much more opportunity offered. It was a slow start but now that she is two years into playing clarinet, she loves it and she can play the instrument very well with practice and consistent, more regular class time. Due to the pandemic, band classes are twice a week instead of three times a week. Concert choir classes have remained twice a week. There is no show choir or jazz choir and she misses these classes.

In early elementary school, it was privately assessed near the end of Kindergarten that my daughter had complex vision issues and we moved her from French Immersion to the English stream to better support her learning by taking away the addition of learning a language. We paid thousands of dollars accessing the best vision therapy offered in our city and for many years she had to work very hard seven days a week to strengthen her visual tracking abilities and learn to "see". Her ability to learn the monkey bars was slow, her academics have not been strong as she needs a lot of time to visually process materials and then translate concepts onto paper. I never dreamed that she would be able to play the clarinet as she had been diagnosed with a very severe tracking visual disability and both her fine and gross motors skills significantly lagged behind her peers. I assumed that violin was like her academics and I didn't think she would do well in band. I was wrong. Full exposure to music at middle school changed everything. My daughter has shown confidence to try out for music solos even though she often feels less confident to show her academic work among her peers. In music, there is no inability, disability, barrier, divide, discomfort, hesitation…she is able, capable, accepted and eager to try new experiences.

My daughter is incredibly well nurtured by Mrs. Romphf and Mrs. McKnight.

As a team, including the strings teacher who was at the school last year before the pandemic, the Cedar Hill Music Program successfully models a well-balanced music environment that works very well together. The students exposure to music is all the more richer for having each of these highly dedicated music teachers and each teaching position contributes invaluable musical components to provide an inclusive, vibrant music experience. The Cedar Hill Music Program excels at demonstrating wholeness and I've always been impressed during school concerts by how fluidly all three music teachers work together showing us how each part creates a whole. This includes the school administration's strong support of the music program. We need kids to feel whole. Schools need to feel whole. The pandemic has highlighted so many divisions in our communities that striving to support completeness is not only humanity at our best but worth the commitment as research shows wholeness and attachments are vital to support healthy growth and development. There is definitely strong human attachments to the Cedar Hill Music Program.

So I end my letter advocating on behalf of my children and on behalf of my community that the music programs of school district 61 not be cut as a familiar solution to help balance the budget.

Something magical happened when my daughter entered middle school and she was welcomed into exploring the Cedar Hill Music Program. We were encouraged to "try everything". My daughter's fingers learned to play the clarinet, she found her voice and she is also now passionately dancing. She is constantly in motion with music swirling around her. In the midst of a pandemic, I would say music is what has kept her from feeling "behind" and from "not meeting expectations" by provided a bridge of tangible, beautiful connection that has shown me that my daughter is going to be fine as she has a song in her heart. She is not spiralling downwards.

I also have an eight-year old son and he doesn't want to be left behind…he is waiting for his turn to "try everything" and cutting music programs cannot be the easy answer when a pandemic has significantly challenged our school budgets. **Unprecedented times calls for unprecedented solutions and although it likely feels like familiar ground to cut music programs as it's been done before, do we always need to go with what feels familiar when there is a new song waiting to be heard?** Familiar solutions is not what is going to get us out of the pandemic and our children and communities deserve wholeness not more brokenness.

So I ask you, superintendent, associate superintendent and board of trustees, "try everything" to keep our school district music programs whole and strong just as I see my daughter and where I imagine my son.

Sincerely,

Leisha Lee

CC: Cedar Hill Music Program and Cedar Hill Middle School Principal Carter Giesbrecht

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Please protect music programs in Middle school
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:02:05 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Melanie Hope
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 3:14 PM
To: 'Melanie Hope' Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc: Trustees <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Please protect music programs in Middle school

Please include my feedback below, in the board meeting agenda package. I've been advised I need to explicitly make this request. Thank you. Melanie.

From: Melanie Hope [mailto:]
Sent: April 10, 2021 7:43 PM
To: 'jwatters@sd61.bc.ca'; 'dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca'; 'nduncan@sd61.bc.ca'; 'tferris@sd61.bc.ca'; 'ahentze@sd61.bc.ca'; 'eleonard@sd61.bc.ca'; 'rpainter@sd61.bc.ca'; 'rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca'; 'awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca'; 'sgreen@sd61.bc.ca'; 'hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca'
Subject: Please protect music programs in Middle school

Reviewing the draft budget, I was truly heartbroken to read about proposed cuts to the middle school band program.

This program has enormous value. In my view, it is one of the most important programs in the school. The band program is teaching my daughter discipline, independence, commitment and perseverance. She has taken these skills into other areas of her life, including academics. I credit the program for bringing her out of her shell and teaching her that hard work pays off.

I hope my youngest child, who enters middle school in 2022, will have the same opportunity. It is honestly heartbreaking to think she may not.

Melanie Hope
parent of two SD61 kids (middle and elementary)

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Support for Middle School Music Education
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:25:48 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Selena Kwok <>
Sent: Saturday, April 10, 2021 11:35 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Support for Middle School Music Education

Please include this letter in the Board Meeting Agenda Package:

I was shocked to find out from our Cedar Hill Music Parent Association that the Middle School Music Program will be drastically reduced so that my daughter who just started learning to play the flute this year in grade six may not be able to continue her music education next year. This was her first year in band and to see her learn how to play an instrument and see how that has helped her grow in other aspects of her life. She has gained more confidence and I have seen how music has affected her positively this year. Being part of a band and learning how to work with others in that capacity is the type of education that can not be replicated elsewhere.

As a child I had benefited from music and arts education in the public school system. This has directly influenced my love of the arts and resulted in my choice of a professional career as an architect. I cannot imagine if those things were taken away from me in middle school and if I would have chosen this current professional path.

Arts education is too often the first to be sacrificed in budget cuts. Creative thinking is what creates our future leaders and without music to foster creative thinking we are robbing our children out of an essential part of their education.

As Sir Ken Robinson says "Learning happens in the minds and souls, not in the databases of multiple-choice tests".

Sincerely,
Selena Kwok

From:
To: Trustees
Subject: Letter from student
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:45:34 PM
Attachments: Aidan"s music letter.jpg

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Dear School Board 61,

Music is my favorite part of school. It's not like sports, where you have to be the most athletic to win. It's not like academics, where you have to be the smartest to pass. It's a safe place, where we can all learn from each other, and with each other. There's no being good, no being bad. No winners, and no losers. Just people, and we play as one.

Please reconsider.

Aidan Fudge, Grade 7 Student of Lansdowne Middle School

From: Allison Stickney
To: Trustees
Subject: Music
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:47:32 AM

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Dear Board members,

I am writing as a parent of two children within the Victoria School District. My son is in grade 8 and has benefitted from playing in the strings program since elementary school. He started when it became available in grade 5 and was immediately hooked at playing the cello. While he was the smallest in his grade, he chose the largest instrument. That hasn't changed; still the smallest and still playing the largest instrument. His skill grew immediately and has continued under the guidance of Melissa McKnight and his other teachers. She has nurtured his natural talent and found a way to keep him engaged when his skill outgrew his peers. She kept him challenged without overwhelming him. He is now the only cello in his pod and carried the bass during his recent concert confidently.

His involvement in music has supported his personal growth. As a shy individual, finding a home in this interest and feeling like he was good at it, supported a lot of personal growth for him. I wouldn't have imagined him doing solos in front of hundreds at any time....It is no longer a surprise, but I am so proud that he felt confident enough to do so, even in grade 5. Seeing this confidence filter into other areas of his life is no coincidence. Had he arrived to grade 9 with the choice of starting strings, I don't believe he would have tried it, nor would he be this confident young man I see today. I believe cutting middle school strings will impact many children greatly.

My daughter is entering grade 5 next year. While she is confident socially and in crowds, she often lacks personal confidence in her skill. I am saddened to hear that losing the strings program may be in the works. I believe that she will benefit both personally and practically by being a part of this program too. I have seen it with my son, and I wish to be able to offer her the same opportunities.

Thanks for hearing my concerns and I hope to be able to sign up my daughter next year.

Please share this letter in your upcoming meeting in my absence due to work.

Allison
--
Allison Stickney
B.A.C.Y.C.

Want to schedule, change or cancel a session?
Head to:

*etransfers are payable to

Your appointment time is important and reserved just for you. Please provide 48hrs notice for cancellations. A full session fee will be charged for late cancellations or no shows.

I acknowledge with respect the Lkwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory I live, work and play, and the Wyomilth and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.
I wish to pay respect to their Elders - past, present and emerging - and acknowledge the important role First Nations peoples continue to play within this community.

From: Amanda Ahokas
To: Trustees
Subject: for agenda - typo in first copy please use this one
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:21:51 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61

My name is Amanda Ahokas, and I am a current parent of two elementary school students in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you in regards to the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music Education in School District 61.

I was the kid that hated gym. I was the quiet studious kid who excelled at academics, and I loved music and art. Middle school is where I found this passion and where many kids find their passion. For some kids, these are the passions that can motivate kids who otherwise dislike school to continue and maybe even excel. For some, it is the ONLY thing that can motivate them. Connection is such an important part of teaching. Some kids find it hard to connect with others and for some music is the only way they can connect. In denying students access to music, you are denying access to fair and equitable education for all. You are denying an opportunity and a channel in which to connect and learn.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Strings/Choir/Band) will impact the district's most vulnerable students. These students might not be able to afford access to music and thus may not find that passion that could drive them to complete high school and beyond. It also takes away opportunities for children of lower income to excel at music and access scholarships in the future that may allow them to attend post secondary education. Kids who can afford to take music lessons outside of school through middle school will be at an advantage when competing for these scholarships.

The messaging regarding music from the district is contradictory. The district felt that music was important enough to allow students to continue blowing in instruments and singing indoors in schools this year even though those activities were considered high risk. Yet now you are saying loud and clear that music is not important. It was important enough to risk our children's health, but now you won't keep it for their wellness?

Cutting music may also result in loss of income for the district. Families that can afford to may choose to send their kids to one of the many private schools in Victoria that have music programs which means less funding for our schools. This does need to be considered in a municipality with so many private schools. Families also have the option to move to a different district presuming the districts around them will still have music programs. Please look at what other districts in our region are doing to balance their budget. There are obviously other ways to fund these programs and if we are to have access to equitable education across the CRD then we need to ALL have music.

I also feel these cuts are disrespectful to the teaching staff that has worked so hard through this pandemic. Cutting their jobs after all the effort and tireless energy and risk they have taken to carry music through such a difficult time is really not a kind way to reward them for

all their efforts this year.

I am not sure what the answer to this problem is, but there must be another way. Please look at what other districts in the province are doing to make up their shortfalls. Can we consider using music to cover prep time instead of less vital programming? We need to have equal education and cutting music cuts connection and does not provide equal education opportunities for all students.

The middle school music program is literally the guts of the 13 year education program, it is where we peak kids interest and spark passions. Music has been such a beacon of hope through this pandemic for so many. It has shown how music can connect young and old from far and wide. Please do not forget the importance of connection. It is vital to our education process.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. It could leave a permanent hole in our children's education and missed opportunities for so many kids.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Dr. Amanda Ahokas
Parent at Marigold Elementary

From: AMBER RIDER
To: Trustees
Subject: Please do not cut our music programs
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 3:14:42 PM

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To Shelley Green, Harold Caldwell, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Amber Rider, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Amber Rider

From:	Jordan Watters
To:	Annie Vallance
Cc:	Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject:	Re: Please don"t stop the music!
Date:	Monday, April 19, 2021 11:00:44 AM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming - we will include your letter in the upcoming board agenda package as requested. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates and an FAQ as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Annie Vallance <
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 7:26 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Please don't stop the music!

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Note: I would like my email to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Dear Mr Watters,

I am writing to ask you to reconsider the sweeping cuts to the middle school music programs.

My children are in Grade 6 at Gordon Head Middle School. One of the things that drew us to Gordon Head was the band program. Our children learn how to play an instrument, but they also learn how to listen, to communicate effectively, to collaborate with others, and to take direction. As the kids learn how to play their instruments, we see them becoming frustrated and then satisfied as they overcome particular hurdles. I will not tell you about the benefits to a child's development to learn how to play an instrument. School should be more about learning skills than about learning content. When you look at the core competencies, so many of them can be explored throughout the band program.

My children, my husband, and I would be devastated should they not be able to continue with their band journey next year. What a huge shame it would be.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hopefully seeing the board reconsider these cuts.

Best wishes,
Annie Vallance

From:	Audrey Wang
To:	Trustees
Cc:	Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker
Subject:	An Immigrant"s View on SD61"s Proposal to Cut Music Programs
Date:	Sunday, April 11, 2021 5:17:36 PM
Attachments:	6F3AF6D2-C9E0-4E9D-9295-15FBC8AC8724.jpeg

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(Please include in board meeting agenda package)

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I am writing to you as a parent of two Strings/Band students in Grades 6 and 9 in SD61 schools and as a recent immigrant to Canada. I am most disappointed to learn about the plan to cut Elementary Strings and Middle School Strings, Band, Choir for Grades 6 and 7, and I urge you to vote against this proposal.

One of the reasons my family came to Canada is so that my children can pursue a well-rounded education, one that nurtures their interests and stimulates their desire for learning. I have been happy with the education my children have gotten in Victoria, and Strings and Band have been a vital part of their learning experience. I am sure I do not need to list the benefits of music as part of a holistic educational system, but here it is anyway:

- Music promotes self-expression and creativity
- Music study stimulates the brain in unique ways not found in other disciplines
- Music is good for mental health
- Music boosts self-esteem
- Music develops discipline and perseverance, translatable to other studies, work and many aspects of life in general
- Music programs create a sense of belonging and a community for students and families
- Music ensembles teach collaboration and teamwork
- Music brings joy and enjoyment to those playing and those listening

I know it is typical that when funding cuts need to be made, arts programming are always first on the chopping block. Please don't perpetuate this pattern of behaviour. While I understand the reasoning behind it – core subjects are more important, not every student will benefit from music programming etc. – I believe students need and want the opportunity to at least access music learning. It is as important as giving them the chance to excel at academics, sports, visual art and other subjects.

On a more personal level, I wish to share that being in Strings and Band have been exceptionally beneficial for my children, in particular my older son, Matthew, who has a learning disability. Being in the music program in Elementary, Middle School and now High School (Strings, Concert Band and Jazz Band), has given him self-confidence, discovery of an interest and a true sense of belonging and acceptance. This last benefit is especially significant

for an otherwise socially awkward child struggling with a disability.

I implore you to not cut funding to existing music programs in SD61. Wholesale cuts to one program is not a viable way of rectifying the budget deficit. It is short-sighted and it will be hard to reinstate it in the future. Educational plans need to be made with a long-term view, not a quick fix.

I strongly support our music students and our passionate music teachers. I hope you do too.

Lastly, I attach a photo taken one year ago of my then Grade 5 son playing the violin in a socially distant doorstep concert for his grandmother. I think this picture speaks a thousand words about the importance of music during these strange times. Please don't allow the school district to take this away from our children.

Sincerely and with thanks for your service,

Audrey Wang

Chairperson, Monterey Music Parents' Association

Monterey Middle School

From: Shelley Green
To: Kim Morris; Victoria Hanley
Subject: FW: Proposed budget cuts to music programs in Victoria
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:49:14 AM
Attachments: image001.jpg

Shelley Green
Superintendent of Schools & CEO
The Greater Victoria School District #61
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
V8Z 1E8
Phone: 250-475-4162 Fax: 250-475-4112
cid:image014.jpg@01D45C90.FD4C7780

From: Barb Lambert
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:48 AM
To: Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Fwd: Proposed budget cuts to music programs in Victoria

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Hello Superintendants.
I would like my letter to be in included in the agenda very much, please and thank you.I am stating my wish for other than the trustees to see it.
Thank you,
Barb Lambert

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Barb Lambert <>
> **Date:** April 10, 2021 at 4:43:34 PM PDT
> **To:** AH Music Letter <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>, Awh Music Letter <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>
> **Cc:** DM Music Letter <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>, Ele Music Letter <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>, JW Music Letter <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>, ND Music Letter <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>, Paint Music Letter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>, Rpay Music Letter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>, Tferr Music Letter <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>
> **Subject: Proposed budget cuts to music programs in Victoria**
>
> Dear representatives,
> As a parent ,former competing musician and a health professional ,I am stunned that this topic and these cuts are even up for discussion!
>
> Learning an instrument or participating in a musical group is something children

remember all of their lives.I know,because I talk with former band mates from over 30 years ago and we agree that the feeling of accomplishment and focus was the best time of our lives!

I implore you to cut corners elsewhere.Give our children something to look forward to when this is all over!
This is not a Covid issue,this is a helping our kids feel human issue!

What would your youth have been like without music?!

Sincerely,Barb Lambert

Sent from my iPad

From: Barrie Webster
To: Trustees
Subject: No cuts to music programs please
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:26:13 PM

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School Board Trustees

District 61

Victoria, BC

Dear Board Trustees

I have been made aware of the proposal to defund the majority of the group music programs in District 61 schools. I am dismayed.

The group music experience in school is singlehandedly the most powerful means of instilling and nurturing cooperative prosocial behaviour in our young people. It is often said that team sports do the same; they encourage teamwork. But the group music experience makes it obligatory. Without cooperation, a band or orchestra, or even a small ensemble cannot function.

I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to take string orchestra (I still play cello) as a full subject for credit all the way through the Kelowna high school system from 1953-1959. It was initiated following the success of the previously established band program by Mark Rose, a remarkable teacher.

That string program produced string players in a town that had almost no private violin teachers, no private teachers for other stringed instruments, and no private teachers for most of the other instruments in the band and orchestra. Our program was so good that in the spring of 1958, our full Kelowna High School Orchestra won the provincial orchestra competition and beat the smaller orchestra of privately tutored students from a prominent Victoria private school because of our superior ability as an ensemble.

My grandsons have been benefiting from the music program in District 61 over the past several years. They and their fellow students need that enviable program to continue. It is one of the important things that makes going to school fulfilling. As a grandparent and retired educator, I know that a feeling of accomplishment fosters effective education.

So for goodness' sake, leave a successful program intact. Music feeds the soul. It is not a frill; group music is highly beneficial for young people who otherwise find it far too easy to simply be spectators in life.

Please maintain financial support for orchestra and band classes in District 61 schools.

Sincerely

Barrie Webster, PhD, Professor (retired)

Victoria

PS Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting

From: Cheryl McKinnon
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Upcoming vote for funding for music
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 11:17:38 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Cheryl McKinnon and I am a parent here in Victoria. I am writing to you regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I can not emphasize enough the importance of the music programs in our schools! When both of my kids entered the music programs in grade 6 they found a place they belonged, a safe space where they were free to be who they truly were, free of bullying and where their self confidence grew in leaps and bounds. Both of my children struggle with mental health and music was the reason they showed up at school.

I watched my oldest in particular flourish - I would often have other teachers and parents comment about how enthusiastic/joyous they were...having no idea that without music my child was a deeply anxious, depressed, suicidal individual -that walking into the music room(s) was like hitting a switch in my child's brain! Music was literally the piece of the puzzle that got my child home from multiple visits/stays at VGH in their pediatric psychiatric ward. . I can stand here and say without any hesitation that music is the reason my child is still alive and why they are graduating this year. They found a safe home with their music family, a reason to get out of bed in the morning, a reason to show up and attend school. Without a doubt music changed their life.

When I look at my youngest, she is by nature a very shy and quiet girl. Yet, upon entering Cedar Hill and their incredible music programs she blossomed! This quiet shy girl not only auditioned in a room full of her peers for a solo but then performed that solo as part of a grade 6 trio in a packed hall at their year end choir concert. My daughter has a LD designation as she has dyslexia. Music has helped her learning and reading comprehension dramatically. She found a place that she belonged when she entered grade 6 and was welcomed into the world of band and choir.

Music programs are more than simply making music - they are learning in a different way, in an inclusive environment/family. When my children make music you can literally see the

joy radiating from them - I can assure you this is not always the way! As a very involved parent who has chaperoned multiple music events/trips - I know my children, they are not unique! Music+ mental health go hand in hand.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Cheryl McKinnon

Parent of:
Marcus McKinnon Reynolds Grade 12 - Class of 2021
Tori-Ann McKinnon Cedar Hill Grade 8

From: Christine Nykiforuk
To: Trustees
Subject: Music speaks
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:22:29 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Ms. Shelley Green, associates and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61;

We are writing to express our deep concern about the proposed cuts to the elementary strings program and the strings and bands program in middle schools.

Our daughter Eden was diagnosed with selective mutism when she was 5 years old. Selective mutism is thought to be due to underlying generalized anxiety.

Although she was a perfectly capable verbal speaker, Eden spoke only with her closest family members. In school and other settings, she was mute - using nonverbal gestures with friends and school staff for YEARS.

Despite extra support from dedicated teachers and EAs, it was her participation in the Grade 5 strings program that finally helped her find her voice. With each squeaky note coaxed from the violin, she grew confident in herself and the school as a safe place for her to begin using her voice.

Eden is now in Grade 6 at Central Middle School and thriving in large part due to the incredible strings and band program. Music soothes. It charms. It speaks.

In these uncertain times, publicly supported music programs have never been more important. Please reconsider the proposed cuts to these vital programs.

We would like our letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Sincerely, Christine Nykiforuk and Reece Tibbitt

April 11, 2021

Dear SD61 Trustees and Staff,

Please include this letter in the Board Meeting Agenda Package.

I am writing again since my original letter dated February 4, 2021 advocating for the continuation of the Grade 5 Strings program. I have been following the 2021-2022 SD61 budget process, and have reviewed the Draft 3 Proposal with efforts to balance out of the $7 million deficit. I was not only surprised to see that the Grade 5 Elementary Strings program was suggested to be cut, but appalled to see the cuts affected Middle School music programs immensely.

Is SD61 trying to kill the music program completely? Has anyone considered what this would mean for high school music programs and the music community and music programs around Greater Victoria? If students are not exposed to music ensemble experiences early, the number of students who choose to join music at the late start of Grade 8 would be very low. Which, in turn, would mean that the majority of students entering High Schools in Greater Victoria would not have previous experience, and therefore would be less likely to join music programs at the age of 14.

Students who are introduced to instruments and ensemble practice early, like with the Grade 5 Elementary Strings Program, or at the very least with the transition to Grade 6 band, strings, and other music options in middle school are much more likely to continue on with music during the rest of their public school career.

We know that music is so very important to child and youth development, and in many ways is much healthier for the spirit, mind, and body than elitism sports programs. With music, it is very inclusive. Everyone is welcome, encouraged, supported. Music students do not need to try out and be told whether they are good enough for the team, like with sports. Music and the arts should continue to be funded, supported, encouraged, as it is so good for our students. They gain lifelong skills while learning music such as the importance of practice, working in a large group, and performing.

At a time when the pandemic has stripped away so many activities and hobbies from our children, we can not lose a program that can be conducted safely within our schools. Music programs give students the opportunity to take a break from their screens, interact with others safely, be inspired and become passionate about music, and practice their instrument at home while building confidence. There is a mental health crisis happening amongst our youth which has been hugely compounded by Covid-19 restrictions. This is not a time to take more away from our students!

My daughter looked forward to her Grade 5 year because of the Strings program and I witnessed first hand how proud and happy the students were as they progressed so much throughout the year. Students currently in Grade 3 and Grade 4 (and even younger) are wanting, and expecting, that same opportunity when they get to Grade 5.

The teachers that work in the Grade 5 Strings program and the music program at Cedar Hill Middle School are amazing. My daughter has been taught by Anja Rebstock, Melissa McKnight, Cindy Romphf, and Steve De Vries and there are others. This is their livelihood. It is not right to cut a valuable music program and cut their jobs in the process.

Several of the strategies for Savings in the Draft 3 of the 2021-2022 SD61 Budget are completely against making schools better for students. Cutting EA hours. This year, you were begging, advertising fast-track career programs to get EA's in school. And now next year, you will turn around and cut these jobs and make our schools less safe and nurturing for students by having less EA's? I surely hope we will never see the considered but not included suggestion of eliminating or reducing daytime custodians. In the midst of a pandemic, surely we've seen that one of the layers of protection to staff and students means keeping the school clean during the day while students and staff are in the building. Come on, Secretary-Treasurer and the budget team, you MUST do better.

Look within the operations of SD61 Administration and possible overkill in some areas. Are 8 District Principals and 5 District Vice-Principals really necessary? It is shocking that you would propose cutting School Vice-Principal hours, the Vice-Prinicipals that teach a class, provide administration to the school, and step-in to all roles as needed at a whim. They are on the front-lines. Why cut their time, and not the 5 District Vice-Principals who are not on the front-lines?

I also want to express my complete frustration and disappointment with your forum for gathering thoughts on the 2021-2022 budget process. The "Thought Exchange" platform is the least effective method for requesting the Greater Victoria School District Community to participate. Each time I attempted to go through the process, and there were several, I became "stuck" at a certain point. I often came across at statement that contained two separate thoughts, and was forced to rate that statement between 1 - 5. Well, I agreed wholeheartedly with the first statement, and disagreed with the second statement. How can I rate that? I also came across statements that I did not agree with, however, did not want to publicly rate these statements for various reasons. This forum is not user-friendly, extremely intimidating and I am sure had put off many users by its' set-up. Please look at changing to a different forum for gathering public opinion in the future.

I hope you will focus on the long-lasting benefits of music and the arts within our community and district and the benefit to all students during the mental health crisis, the worldwide pandemic, and look to make changes that will not impact students and teachers so heavily.

I request your support in making the best decision for the students.

Sincerely,

Cindy Luchka
Doncaster PAC Executive Member
Cedar Hill Middle School Parent

From: Dante André-Kahan
Subject: Music Education
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:26:01 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Dante and I am a former K-12 School District 61 student from Victoria, B.C. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for music and inclusive education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of music education in schools cannot be disputed. Music education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt on a community, provincial, and federal level. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Dante André-Kahan

From: Jordan Watters
To: Elizabeth McKnight
Cc: Harold Caldwell; Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject: Re: Please include in board meeting agenda
Date: Monday, April 19, 2021 10:50:45 AM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates and an FAQ as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Elizabeth McKnight <
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 6:03 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Please include in board meeting agenda

Dear SD61 Board of Trustees,

I am writing in regard to the proposed budget for 2021-2022 and the cuts to the music programs. I believe music plays a vital role in children's education and development and feel it should not be cut out of middle schools.

I have seen the benefits of a music education first-hand by being a parent and a grand parent of children in a band or music program. The music program is like being on a sports team or a place of belonging for many children that are not able to or do not want to play sports. They are part of a team of musicians and have a place to belong.

My son's were part of a band and made friendships there that they have carried on to there adult life. My grandson struggled with anxiety and low self-esteem until he got into the music program in middle school. He has now found something he is good at and with like minded class mates. The music program has offered him a safe, encouraging, and uplifting place to be.

COVID 19 has amplified the need for music in our schools, children need a happy safe place where they are a part of a group, as many are struggling with isolation.

While I understand that budgets must be balanced and cuts are always hard, I strongly believe that removing such an essential social/emotional outlet is detrimental to the well-being of the students.

Please find another way to balance the budget.

Thank you for your time.

Elizabeth McKnight

From: Eric Sager
To: Shelley Green
Cc: Trustees; Deb Whitten
Subject: middle school music
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 2:44:08 PM

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SD 61 Trustees: I request that this email be included in the agenda package for the next Board meeting. I join the chorus of voices expressing opposition to proposed cuts to middle school music programs. Are trustees not aware of the huge volume of research and knowledge on the cognitive and learning benefits of music? Do you pay attention to what experts on child learning know, and say? It would be as sensible to cut Mathematics or Science as it is to cut music. Music is a core and indispensable part of education. If you must make cuts, surely you need to make cuts that will cause minimal damage to our children and their learning. I will pay close attention to this issue and will take careful note of those trustees who vote in favour of such an ill-informed proposal. Thank you for considering my views. Eric W Sager,

From:	Erin Finlayson
To:	Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Cc:	Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker
Subject:	Budget Meeting - Keep Music Education in schools
Date:	Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:44:55 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Erin Finlayson, and I am a teacher and parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools. It is always the students that suffer. Perhaps you should look at the number of district principals and vice principals and make reductions there.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again. It is always the students that suffer. Perhaps you should look at the number of district principals and vice principals and make reductions there.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

My daughters LOVE the music education programs that they have experienced this far. My eldest is continuing to play the trumpet in grade 7 and is excited to learn more. My youngest, in grade 3 is learning to play the recorder and loves to sing with her class. She is

sad that the pandemic has impacted her ability to join a school choir. They deserve the opportunity to continue to explore their musical interests at school.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Erin Finlayson

From: Gail Evans
To: Trustees
Subject: Music cuts - Victoria Sings
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:50:51 PM

I am struggling to find words to describe my shock and dismay to find out that long time, successful, powerhouse music programs that are vital to kids' social, emotional and academic learning are on the chopping block. As an elementary music teacher, I can't imagine telling my grade four students that there may be no Strings program for them next year. They have been waiting for ages and trained well to have an instrument placed in their hands. Strings classes are heavily subscribed at my school. To further explain to them that the programs they were looking forward to at middle school could also be cut is unthinkable. I am sure that they will be hearing about these proposed cuts via the media and I don't know how to face them. These poor kids have already lost over a year of choir, Victoria Sings and two musicals. You don't have to tell kids how important these programs are – they know!

I was even more shocked to see Victoria Sings on the list of potential cuts. I have been the volunteer coordinator of Victoria Sings since 1999 and have worked with teacher and administrative volunteers on our own time to create this opportunity for kids. Victoria Sings has been bringing singers in SD61 together since 1979. This amazing four day choral concert series at the UVic Auditorium brings together choirs from all over the district and usually involves 1200 to 1500 students from grades 2 to 12. Families of schools come together to see what can be accomplished as kids progress through the grades. Victoria Sings runs every other year as it alternates with Ukuleles Unlimited. The only cost to the district is to cover the TOC costs for the teachers who run the morning rehearsals, manage choir movement and accompany. This is four half days for 3 people every other year.

Please include this email in the Board meeting agenda package. Thank you.

Gail Evans
Music Teachers
Willows Elementary

From: Gerald G
To: Trustees
Subject: SD budget cuts
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:44:47 PM

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April 11, 2021

School Board Trustees

Greater Victoria School District Board of Education
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
V8Z 1E8

Dear All,

I am concerned that the cuts were not done fairly. Why were not all programs cut equally (like sports programs). I don't think you understand the importance of music in people's lives. Can you bring up my concerns at the next meeting?

It has recently come to my attention that the Board of Trustees is considering cutting funding to music programming in excess of $1,000,000. Even worse, these proposed cuts include the elimination of funding for program administration of the Island Ukuleles program.

Island Ukuleles has been a staple in our community since 1977, offering generations of youth in Greater Victoria a safe and welcoming place in which to learn, grow and make music. As a parent of a child involved in this programming, I'm compelled to speak up and explain to you and the other board members how incredibly important this program is.

Serving well over 125 children and youth each year, the program offers more than instruction in music; it offers a community and a place for our children to learn about teamwork, giving back to the community and finding a place to belong. The program is also supported by a society made up of parents, past participants and other community members who see the value that Island Ukuleles offers not only to the vast amount of youth involved, but also to the community at large. Society members volunteer countless hours fundraising, coordinating the program and organizing concerts, many of which are open to the public. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, some of our favourite concerts were held in long-term care homes for the elderly, and they cannot wait for this to be over so that we can return. None of this would be possible without the invaluable support of the district teachers who administer the program.

Simply put, the Island Ukuleles program provides a staggering benefit to the youth in Greater Victoria and is heavily supported by the community. To withdraw the Board of Education's support in this important program would negatively impact hundreds, if not thousands of people in our region. We have found ways to continue through the pandemic, thanks mainly to the passionate teachers involved in the program. Please don't cut our last lifeline and end this crucial programming for our children, who are struggling more than ever.

I am concerned that the cuts were not done fairly. Why were not all programs cut equally (like sports programs). I don't think you understand the importance of music in people's lives. Can you bring up my concerns at the next meeting?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Gerald Gayleard

From: Glenys Webster
To: Trustees
Cc: Murray Harris; Kayli Wilkinson; Anja Rebstock; Paul Luchkow
Subject: Save SD61 music programs!
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:37:37 PM

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Please include the following letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Dear SD61 trustees

My name is Max and I'm a grade 4 student and musician at Sir James Douglas elementary school. I have been looking forward to playing the cello in the Grade 5 strings program next year and starting a band instrument in Grade 6. I'm writing to ask you to do what you can to keep music programs running as much as possible next year.

I understand that COVID has brought extra expenses for schools, but music education, in my opinion, is not the place where cuts should be made to save money.

Playing music and singing are two of my favourite things to do. I love how it makes me feel to play or sing in harmony in a group. Music is a universal language that can help connect people and make them feel part of something special. This is particularly important during the current pandemic when it's difficult for people to feel connected while complying with COVID measures.

If kids aren't given the opportunity to learn and explore music at school, many might not have the opportunity to do it at all. Without school music programs, some kids may never discover that music is their passion. They might grow up never knowing what it feels like to play in a group where everyone relies on each other and needs to work together to create something beautiful.

Musicians and the arts have already been struggling during the COVID pandemic. What are music teachers going to do if they lose their jobs for a year? Will they come back next year or move to another city where music education is more valued? Cutting music programs may allow the school district to recover financially, but the damage will be done.

How do you want to be remembered?

Max Webster (age 9)

From:	Jordan Watters
To:	Annika Clark
Cc:	Grayson Threlfall; Anisa Linuzzi; Alexandra Namuco; Erin Meiklejohn; Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject:	Re: Student Perspective on Music Budget Cuts
Date:	Monday, April 19, 2021 11:09:01 AM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming - as requested, we will include your letter in the upcoming board meeting agenda package. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates and an FAQ as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Annika Clark
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 7:51 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc:

Subject: Student Perspective on Music Budget Cuts

Trustee Watters,

As a group of grads who have had their school experience heavily impacted by our respective music programs, we are appalled by the budget cuts that have been proposed. School music programs are so important to have available, as they provide invaluable opportunities and experiences within the music industry, make music accessible to those who can't afford private lessons, and create chances to build lifelong friendships and communities. These budget cuts will have a catastrophic effect on the youth in our school district and will send a terrible message to other districts.

Music programs in schools give students the opportunity to gain both life skills, like teamwork and routine, and hands-on experience within the music industry, whether that be through performing at festivals, having the chance to see live music or through volunteer opportunities. Many students don't even realize their passion for music until they're presented with options in late elementary school or middle school. Band provides kids with

opportunities to learn teamwork and collaboration, which carries over into adult life. Learning an instrument requires discipline, focus and routine, which also can be applied to many areas in professional life. These skills can be very challenging to learn at a young age without the help of music,

One of the most important aspects of school music programs is that they cost little to no money to participate in. An average year of one hour private lessons through the Royal Conservatory of Music costs approximately 2775 dollars. This cost makes private lessons incredibly inaccessible to most families. Public school music programs know this and strive to make their programs as accessible as possible when it comes to monetary issues. There are school instruments available to borrow, plenty of free excursions and, on the off-chance something will cost money, there are ample fundraising opportunities to raise money to cover costs. Music shouldn't be a passion that only upper class kids get to pursue; it should be accessible for all.

The sense of community that is built is possibly the most important aspect of school music programs. The band room is such a safe space for so many kids when they're at school. It's so easy to make friends because you all have something in common: a passion and love for music. The friendships made in band programs are incredibly tight knit due to the amount of intense teamwork and time spent with each other on a weekly basis. The community fostered within music programs has saved countless lives. School music programs give kids something to be passionate about and helps build their self confidence, which in turn improves mental health exponentially. Taking this source of pride and confidence away would have exponential consequences on the psyche of youth.

School music programs can, under no circumstance, be cut. Their impact is far too high on students and the mere notion of cutting back on music programming is outrageous. So many students rely on their music classes to get through their day, through their school experience, and even through life. The loss of these programs would be catastrophic and have a devastating impact on students district-wide.

We are hoping for this to be included in the board meeting agenda

Sincerely,

Grayson Threlfall, Annika Clark, Alexandra Namuco, Erin Meiklejohn, Anisa Linuzzi and Lyric Berry

From:	Hannah Pirker
To:	Trustees
Cc:	Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Deb Whitten
Subject:	Budget cuts
Date:	Sunday, April 11, 2021 5:42:59 PM

I am a student in SD61 and am appalled by the proposed budget cuts. Music is fundamental to having a well rounded education. Improved mental health, self expression, creative outlet are just a few of the benefits music can have. For many kids these music programs give them opportunities they might not otherwise have due to financial constraints at home. If you care about our education you will not cut our music programs. I am asking this email be included in the board meeting agenda package.
Hannah

From: Heidi Gayleard
To: Trustees
Subject: Budget cuts for music programs in SD61
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:03:50 PM

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April 10, 2021

School Trustees

Greater Victoria School District Board of Education
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
V8Z 1E8

Dear all,

I am a mother of two girls in the SD61 district. Both are well rounded children and have taken part in dance, sports and music. All great programs. My children have been part of Island Ukuleles since they were 5 years old and have had the opportunity to travel and play in places they normally would never have had a chance to go. They have given back to the community by doing concerts for people of all areas of life to enjoy. Music is one thing that is non-denominational and can be enjoyed by all. Music is much more than just music, it is a community, friendships, and builds self confidence. It allows you to smile when you are feeling down and for even just a moment forget your worries.

It has recently come to my attention that the Board of Trustees is considering cutting funding to music programming in excess of $1,000,000. I understand that cuts need to be done but to only cut music (and such a HUGE one) and none to sports or other programs is hard to swallow. To loose these music programs in our schools would be detrimental to our children and youth. Included in these proposed cuts include the elimination of funding for the program administration of the Island Ukuleles program.

Island Ukuleles has been a staple in our community since 1977, offering generations of youth in Greater Victoria a safe and welcoming place in which to learn, grow and make music. As a parent of a child involved in this programming, I'm compelled to speak up and explain to you and the other board members how incredibly important this program is.

Serving well over 125 children and youth each year, the program offers more than instruction in music; it offers a community and a place for our children to learn about teamwork, giving back to the community and finding a place to belong. The program is also supported by a society made up of parents, past participants and other community members who see the value that Island Ukuleles offers not only to the vast amount of youth involved, but also to the community at large. Society members volunteer countless hours fundraising, coordinating the program and organizing concerts, many of which are open to the public. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, some of our favourite concerts were held in long-term care homes for the elderly, and they cannot wait for this to be over so that we can return. None of this would be possible without the invaluable support of the district teachers who administer the program.

Simply put, the Island Ukuleles program provides a staggering benefit to the youth in Greater Victoria and is heavily supported by the community. To withdraw the Board of Education's support in this important program would negatively impact hundreds, if not thousands of people in our

region. We have found ways to continue through the pandemic, thanks mainly to the passionate teachers involved in the program. Please don't cut our last lifeline and end this crucial programming for our children, who are struggling more than ever.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering a different avenue to doing these drastic cuts. Please bring this letter to be read at the board meeting being held on Tuesday April 13, 2021.

Sincerely,

Heidi Gayleard

April 10, 2021

Shelley Green, Greater Victoria School District Board of Education
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
V8Z 1E8

Dear Shelley,

It has recently come to my attention that the Board of Trustees is considering cutting funding to music programming in excess of $1,000,000. Even worse, these proposed cuts include the elimination of funding for program administration of the Island Ukuleles program.

Island Ukuleles has been a staple in our community since 1977, offering generations of youth in Greater Victoria a safe and welcoming place in which to learn, grow and make music. I have been involved with Island Ukuleles for over 15 years. I began as a student in grade 4 and continued until the end of grade 12. Some of my fondest memories are from my time as a student in this program. So much so that after graduation I returned as a teacher. I have taught for 7 years and am now the leader of the elementary aged group. Island Ukulele is more than a music program, it is a family.

Serving well over 125 children and youth each year, the program offers more than instruction in music; it offers a community and a place for our children to learn about teamwork, giving back to the community and finding a place to belong. The program is also supported by a society made up of parents, past participants and other community members who see the value that Island Ukuleles offers not only to the vast amount of youth involved, but also to the community at large. Society members volunteer countless hours fundraising, coordinating the program and organizing concerts, many of which are open to the public. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, some of our favourite concerts were held in long-term care homes for the elderly, and they cannot wait for this to be over so that we can return. None of this would be possible without the invaluable support of the district teachers who administer the program.

Simply put, the Island Ukuleles program provides a staggering benefit to the youth in Greater Victoria and is heavily supported by the community. To withdraw the Board of Education's support in this important program would negatively impact hundreds, if not thousands of people in our region. We have found ways to continue through the pandemic, thanks mainly to the passionate teachers involved in the program. Please don't cut our last lifeline and end this crucial programming for our children, who are struggling more than ever.

Sincerely,

Helena Budgell

From: Holly Cairns
To: Trustees
Subject: Middle school music program
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:36:47 AM

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Greetings trustees, I am writing to express my dismay at the proposed sd61 budget for 2021/22 and ask that you reconsider the significant cuts to the middle school music program. The strings program has been a bright light for my daughter during a very challenging and trying year. It has contributed significantly to her emotional health as well as being a point of community for both the kids and parents. It's well known that music also contributes to our children's intellectual growth. She will be utterly dismayed if she comes back to school next year and learns that she has to abandon playing her violin because there is no school program. Please find the funds to keep all our critical programs.

I would like my letter included in the board meeting package.

Thank you, Holly Cairns

Sent from my iPad

From:	Jennifer Flaherty
To:	Trustees
Cc:	Shelley Green; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Harold Caldwell
Subject:	Musical Education
Date:	Sunday, April 11, 2021 4:38:11 PM

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To school board trustees and superintendent of schools,

Please include the following letter on the board meeting agenda package.

As a parent of two students in School District 61, I was disappointed to hear of the proposed budget cuts to elementary and middle school music programs.

The science is clear. Musical education helps children develop cognitively, improves memory, develops fine motor skills, and markedly improves literacy and math. Moreover, music offers a means of emotional expression, improves self esteem, and offers a unique opportunity to develop social skills. In the times our children are living through, with so many sport, art and extra curricular activities taken from them due to COVID, these music education programs are critical.

We live in a city where the gap between the "haves and have-nots" is growing exponentially. Music, art and sports in school allow all children to join, regardless of social-economic standing. If music programs are reduced and removed in schools, we make another skill that is only available to those families who can afford the time and money involved in extra curricular music classes. Making musical education unattainable for so many families in Victoria.

My oldest son has learned to play the viola this year in his Grade 5 strings program. I am amazed how far he has come in a short time! It's his first opportunity to learn an instrument, and he has thrived. He takes care of his own viola, practices after school, and has the ability to read music notes. He is excited for the days when he has strings class with Ms. Rebstock, and can't wait to play new songs for family and friends (virtually this year). Our experience with Ms. Rebstock and the strings program has been wonderful.

It makes me sad to know that he may not have the opportunity for an instrument in Middle school, and his younger brother will not have access to the elementary strings program.

It is a simple choice to fund a program that offers children important emotional, social, and cognitive opportunities. Music education in schools offers a level playing field to children from all social-economic statuses. Especially at this time, opportunities to enrich and enhance our children's education and well being should be a priority.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Flaherty

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Advocating In Support of Middle School Music Programs and the Grade five strings program
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:04:51 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Jennifer
Sent: Saturday, April 10, 2021 7:20 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc: Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Advocating In Support of Middle School Music Programs and the Grade five strings program

---

Good Evening,

With regard to my messages below, please feel free to use them in the board meeting agenda package.
Thank you,
Jennifer Orrange

On Apr 10, 2021, at 2:45 PM, jennifer orrange wrote:

Dear School Board Trustees, Superintendent Shelley Green and Associate Superintendent Herold Caldwell,

I am writing to you to express my heartfelt opinion with regard to the proposed cut to the budget for Middle School Music Programs.

It was with great disappointment and upset that I learned yesterday of the proposed cuts and feel the need to reach out to share my feelings and those of my family.

I am the mother of a grade five and grade seven student in SD 61. Both children participate(d) in the grade five strings program and our eldest has been delighted to participate in almost every music program available at Cedar Hill Middle School.

When our eldest son was in the fifth grade, we had the opportunity to go to the middle school to for a parent and student information evening to see what it was going to be like to attend middle school. As soon as we entered the gymnasium at Cedar Hill we could feel the positive energy and the enthusiasm of the administration and the teachers and it was infectious. There was an immediate feeling of belonging and an urge to become a part of what was going on at that school. That was our first taste of the music programs, a few of which put on a couple of numbers to showcase what would be available for the following year's cohort.

Our son was enamoured. He was so excited to join all of the groups possible, and we had to have a serious look at scheduling to fit in all that he wanted to do with music and sports and clubs...Middle School, we realized, was going to be all about trying new things, finding what you love and are passionate about, and opening your mind to new experiences.

We were not disappointed. In grade six our son exhausted himself filling every minute of the day from before school, lunch time and after school with music, sports and clubs. We told him to back out of something to give himself a break but he was so passionate and dedicated to everything and determinedly told us that there was no way he was going to miss out on any of it!

Music, above all, the orchestra, strings and multiple choirs were for him, what he loved most and what got him out of bed early in the morning, going to school in the winter before it was light out, and coming home once the sun had already set with determination and without complaining.

We attribute this in part to the incredible positive influences of the talented and dedicated music teachers at Cedar Hill Middle School. We have had nothing but positive experiences with classroom teachers at the school but never have I seen teachers more personable, caring, enthusiastic and professional as those who are teaching our son music. They have certainly aided in the development of our son's love for music and are helping him to be all he can as a student of music and we believe that the development of his passion and dedication mirrors that of his teachers and we are so grateful and so impressed.

This year, due to Covid-19, there were no sports, there were no clubs and the music programs had to be cut to just a few of last years offerings in order to limit the group sizes. This was all understandable and we were all disappointed but supportive and grateful that there are still some music programs allowed to continue in this year of drastic limitations. We had all been looking forward to next year and a return to a more 'normal' school year.

Our younger son has been approaching his graduation from elementary school and the beginning of life as a middle schooler with the same enthusiasm as his older brother and excited to be able to participate in all of the programs and opportunities his brother has had. He was devastated when we told him of the potential cuts to the programs he so badly wants to be a part of. He feels robbed and frankly, so do we as parents wanting the best for our children and as tax payers. We do not accept the cuts to the Middle School Music Program or those to the Grade Five Strings program.

It would not be possible to find the time in the day or the money to allow for the same calibre of musical education for our children outside of school. It is easy to find research evidencing the positive effects of music on a child's learning experience. In normal times it enhances a child's focus, memory, critical thinking and self-esteem but in the world-altering times of Covid-19, it has become even more important to help with reducing anxiety, offering a place of belonging and maintaining a semblance of normal.

I implore you not to make the proposed cuts to these valuable programs at our middle schools. The future, our future depends on the development and education of the children now. In Canada, in Victoria, we tout our system and the ability to offer world class education to our kids but all they and we are seeing is a paring down of what makes our system special and advantageous for the most important asset we have for the future: Our kids.

Finally, to not recognize the talent, dedication, passion and positive influence of the teachers of the music programs would be unfair. These are incredible people and our children would be unfairly disadvantaged to have them taken away as educators.

I do not accept the proposed cuts.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Orrange

This is the message I wrote to Mr. Jordan Watters on February 11, 2021 in support of the SD 61 Grade Five Strings Program before I realized that the middle school Music Programs were also on the budgetary chopping block. I remain firm in my belief that this program is important to our children's education and a valuable and irreplaceable component of a well-rounded education.

Dear Jordan Watters,

I am writing in support of the Grade Five strings program within SD 61

We have two sons, one who is currently in grade five who is learning the cello this year and a son who is in grade seven and participating in his third year of strings-playing the violin.

We have found the strings program to be beneficial in many ways to the lives of our children. Due to the cost and lack of time in our schedules, picking up an instrument would likely not have happened for our boys if it wasn't for the strings program offered at the school.

Our kids have positive attitudes and jump at the chance to try new activities and strings was something they both looked forward to participating in when they reached grade five.

Once our first son began the strings program it fostered a confidence in him that allowed him to join multiple choirs and the band where he picked up a new instrument when he entered Middle School. He has become very involved with choirs in and out of school and has discovered a love and talent for singing that I am not sure he would have realized had it not been for his introduction to music and his participation in it at which began with the strings program in grade five.

We credit, in part, the great support and education he received from the very talented, competent and professional teacher he had and our younger son now has and is also inspired by.

Our younger son can't wait to join the strings ensemble in middle school and plans to continue with the cello and talks about wanting to try the stand up bass and the two boys can't wait to play together in the orchestra at middle school.

The grade five strings program is a privilege and a wonderful opportunity for kids to be introduced to the language of music.

Our kids needed an extra challenge at elementary school, and the strings program gave them that and so much more.

The exposure to a different teacher than the one they have everyday and a different perspective and being around kids that they might not otherwise have hung around with and a being taught a different way to express themselves has been invaluable to their confidence, ability to dedication to practice and their ensemble and exposure to and appreciation for different types of music.

My husband grew up in Europe and there is a very stark contrast between the importance given to and the funding allotted to the arts and music in particular when we compare Canada to European countries and it is sad to witness the potential cut to the strings program for budgetary reasons.

I have read about a number of studies with regard to the connection between children who learn music and their improved language and reading skills, memory, concentration and focus. We have certainly seen those benefits in our kids and a definite increased their appreciation for music that we will continue to foster.

The strings program is an important part of a child's education and a way to introduce children to music where they may not have otherwise had the opportunity or option to do so.

We would be incredibly sad and disappointed to see the strings program for fifth grade be stricken from SD 61.

It would be a shame for so many reasons.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Orrange

April 11, 2021

To Shelley Green, Harold Caldwell, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Jessica Williams and I am a **teacher, community member, parent and past student** in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools. Mental, social and emotional health have been identified as priorities by our school board, yet by taking creative outlets that bring comfort to so many students as well as depleting learning supports, these cuts counter act what our district goals are. The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.
I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Jessica Williams

From: Julia
To: Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Ann Whiteaker; Rob Paynter; Ryan Painter; Elaine Leonard; Angie Hentze; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Diane Mcnally; Jordan Watters; Trustees
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts in SD61
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 2:38:19 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, Harold Caldwell, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Julia Albano-Crockford, and I am a Music teacher, and past music student from Victoria, BC, now living in Salmon Arm. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I attended Monterey Elementary School, and was part of the first grade eight graduating class of Monterey Middle School, after which I attended Oak Bay Secondary School before moving on to the UVic School of Music to eventually become a Music teacher who started her career in the same school district she grew up in. I was fortunate enough to sing in school choirs from the age of six, participate in elementary strings, participate in school musicals, and play in band as a percussionist beginning in grade seven. All of these experiences shaped who I am today, and have made me into the teacher have become. Growing up with a severe health condition, music class was one of the only times I was ever able to relax and simply exist without worry. My music teachers supported me in ways only the very most dedicated and passionate classroom teachers did, providing me with consistency and support from K-12.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's

most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I did my final teaching practicum at Mount Douglas Secondary School in 2019 with my incredible mentor Douglas Awai, and it was during that practicum that I got to truly witness the incredible work that middle school band teachers do. The grade nines at Mount Doug were some of the most creative and passionate students I have ever worked with, and they came to Mount Doug from middle school band programs all over the district. This was a group of kids who came to school early on days they did not have to, just to make music together. These kids formed close bonds with each other and with their teachers, and I miss them every day.

After completing my practicum, I worked as a TTOC, primarily in middle school music band and choir rooms all over the district where I got to meet even more young musicians, who love what they do, and come to school to make music with a passion and excitement I thought only first year university music students had.

I moved to Salmon Arm for a change of scenery, seeking employment in a greater capacity than just as a TTOC (which I promptly found despite the pandemic) in September 2020, but the attitude towards music education here is far behind Victoria. I took a contract working as a Learning Resource teacher in a junior high, and found the school culture void of the passion and enthusiasm I took for granted in every school I've worked at in SD 61. Music matters. Music makes an incredible impact in the lives of young people.

Speaking from the newfound experience I've gained working in Learning Resource, I can also speak to the proposed budget cuts to Education Assistance. Funding for students on category is already incredibly low and insufficient. Please do not take away support these disadvantaged students already desperately require. It will negatively impact the rest of their lives in ways you could never understand.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Julia Albano-Crockford
She/Her
I acknowledge that I am an uninvited settler, working and living on the unceded and unsurrendered lands of the Secwepemc people.

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Music Program Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:17:19 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Julianna Kwan
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 4:27 PM
To: Trustees <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Fwd: Music Program Cuts
**Please include this email in the board meeting agenda.

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Julianna Kwan**
Date: Sun, Apr 11, 2021 at 1:21 PM
Subject: Music Program Cuts
To: <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>, <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>, <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>, <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>, <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>, <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>, <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>, <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>, <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>, <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>, <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>, <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>

Good afternoon!

My name is Julianna Kwan and I'm currently in grade 11 at Reynolds secondary. It's recently come to my attention that the school board has proposed some budget cuts to middle and elementary school music programs. I'm writing this email to you today to share my opinion as to why this would be an awful decision to make based on some of my personal experiences.

I have been heavily involved in my school's music programs ever since I had the opportunity to join my school's strings program in grade 5. Ever since then, music has been a very important part of my life and has taught me so many valuable lessons. These music programs helped me come out of my shell going into middle and high school and I would not be the person I am today without them. I have learned leadership skills, public speaking skills, how to be outgoing and inclusive in school environments, and that I have the ability to chase my dreams and can do anything I put my mind to.

In my first year in high school, I had troubles with some friends and ended up sitting alone at lunch for most days. These times were extremely hard and had a negative impact on my mental health at the time. It was the music programs that had helped me get through these times the most and I found myself almost solely looking forward to rehearsals because I had known how fun they were from my middle school's music programs. Rehearsals were also times when I could see other students that had similar interests to me and who had quickly become my friends. This community of musicians is the reason I had gotten through grade 9 as well as so many other hard times.

As I'm now in grade 11, I have to start thinking about what I'll want to do in post secondary, and even though I don't plan to pursue a career in music, lessons that I have learned from it will help me in the field I do plan to pursue. These music programs that you plan to cut taught me to be ambitious, and I am. I have plans to pursue engineering, a profession that requires a lot of critical thinking and problem solving, skills I have learned and used in music programs, especially in the past year. If you cut these programs, a lot of kids will not have the mindset to learn these skills easily.

Even as I only have one year left of high school, and with it one year left to enjoy these music programs, I have so many reasons to want to save the elementary and middle school programs. I would not be the musician I am today without the fundamental programs I was a part of in my younger years. It was then that I found my love for music as I'm sure many other young people have recently and will hopefully continue to if we can work out a solution. I would hate to see so many young students have all these amazing opportunities taken away from them, before they even have the chance to realize what they've missed. My little sister who's in grade 6 has fallen in love with music after not even a full school year of having experienced it. She was in tears when she found out that the thing she loves will be taken away from her, and I'm sure she's not the only one. This goes to show how impactful these programs are to young students.

I urge you to please reconsider your decision to cut these programs. I understand that these are extremely hard times, but I know that we can find a solution. You have many students who would be happy to help if it means keeping these programs, just ask. I would hate for the school board to have to make the cruel decision to take away these beloved programs.

Thank you for your time,

Julianna Kwan

From: Karen Manders
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: No cuts to Music Education!!
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:38:45 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Karen Manders and I am a parent of children at Willows Elementary and Lansdowne Middle School in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Karen Manders

From:	Jordan Watters
To:	Kim Mcknight
Cc:	Victoria Hanley; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject:	Re: Greater Victoria School District No. 61 , proposed 2021-2022 Budget
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 6:06:08 PM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From:
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 3:52 PM
To:
Subject: Greater Victoria School District No. 61 , proposed 2021-2022 Budget

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Good Day,

Please add this to the board meeting agenda package.

It has been brought to my attention that once again Music Programs in the Greater Victoria School District No. 61 have been targeted for cuts.

Creativity in the pure and undiluted form is the true definition of Music. Music is an important part of our life as it is a way of expressing our feelings as well as emotions. Music is a powerful therapy that will make you calm down and in the moment of joy, it will make you cheerful. It develops the mind and boosts your self confidence.

Students who have early musical training will develop the areas of the brain related to

language and reasoning. Students learn to improve their work. Learning music promotes craftsmanship, and students learn to want to create good work instead of mediocre work.

There are many economic benefits from music. These include job retention and attraction, increased foreign direct investment, increased tourism spending, youth retention and attraction, retail instrument providers and spinoff talent attraction for BC's tech industries.

I would ask that you consider why there is a short fall and remedy it from the source. Not look at successful programs to cut that mean so much to so many people.

Be calm...be kind...stay safe.

Respectfully,

Mr.Kim McKnight.

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hapley
Subject: Fw: On behalf of Lorelai Haas
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:31:38 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Kimberley Haas
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:50 AM
To: Trustees <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: On behalf of Lorelai Haas

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Dear Trustees,

My name is Lorelai Haas and I am a Grade 3 student at George Jay Elementary School.

i'm so excited for music in Grade 6 and 7 but if you make the cuts I won't get music so please do not.

Please include this in the board meeting agenda.

Lorelai Haas

From: kristin james
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Funding for music in sd61
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:48:38 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,My name is Kristin James and I am a parent, and past so 61 music student in Victoria, BC.

As an alumni of the island ukuleles as graduate of classical studies I am extremely disappointed to hear of the possible cuts to music in our schools.

I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully, kristin james

Kristin James

Sent from my phone

From: Lara R
To: Trustees
Subject: proposed budget cuts to music program
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:42:09 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include the following in the upcoming board meeting agenda package:

School District 61's proposed cuts to its music programs are ill-advised on several fronts. Let me tell you why I believe this.

The music education my daughter received K-12 in this school district has been second to none, true to the district's vision of providing a world-class learning community. Through this publicly-funded program, she and her classmates have learned to read music, to sing, to play an instrument (two, in my daughter's case), and to perform as an ensemble. They've learned how to commit to the practice required for performance excellence, how to work as a team, how to hone their focus and discipline to improve their musicianship, and how to appreciate music as an expression of human experience. And, importantly, they have applied these skills to their academic studies. Talk about learning for the whole child!

My daughter is graduating from high school this year, and has recently accepted an offer to join the University of Victoria's School of Music program. Not only has she been awarded an entrance scholarship for academic excellence, but she has also been awarded a music-specific scholarship based on her audition performance. These accomplishments would not have been possible without the SD 61 music education she received starting in kindergarten, and the leadership and mentoring from teachers Mr. Knoke, Ms. Romph, Mr. Jacklin, Mr. Davis, and Ms. Kerr.

SD 61 is committed to providing each student with the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations. The music education program is accessible to all who want to participate – no auditions, no try-outs. Youth benefit from the opportunity to study music without having to pay for extra-curricular instruction. And for many students, the music program becomes a home, a welcoming and safe space at school where they can be creative, make new friends, take risks, and explore their leadership potential. For a few, it's the only reason they attend school.

A cut to the district's elementary- and middle-school music programs is a blow to the high-school program. SD 61 music students come to grade nine with a strong musical foundation, which allows them to achieve a high standard of musicianship in their senior grades. How will this be possible if they haven't had the opportunity to participate in a fulsome Elementary and Middle Strings programs, or Middle Choir, or Middle Band?

It is for these reasons that I urge you to abandon cutting funding from SD 61's music program; instead, I encourage you to maintain funding at its current level – if not find the means to increase it. That $65 per student is an investment that will continue to pay dividends across our city and beyond.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lara Riecken

SD 61 parent

From: Lc Nakamura
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd: Proposed cuts to music programs
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 12:11:56 PM

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Good afternoon,
I understand that feedback can be included in the board meeting agenda package and I'd like to request that my email below be included.
Thank you,
Lisa

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Lc Nakamura** <>
Date: Sun, Apr 11, 2021 at 2:27 AM
Subject: Proposed cuts to music programs
To: <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>, <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>, <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>, <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>, <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>, <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>, <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>, <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>

Dear SD 61 Board of Trustees and Senior Administration,

Let me begin by acknowledging the extremely challenging task you have of managing the budget, keeping in mind both short term and longer term strategic considerations.

I am writing because I am extremely concerned about the proposed cuts to music programs in the district, both because of the immediate impact to children, but because such cuts would be a false economy and significant strategic error.

Learning music provides very tangible and demonstrable evidence to students that:

- individually
  - their effort and practice build results
  - they must be accountable for their part
  - music is a tool for connection and creativity, and
  - music is an outlet for stress and emotion
- as a group
  - collaboration can produce amazing results much bigger than the sum of the parts
  - they can use the power of music to create and support positive school culture and spirit
  - it is OK (even great!) to be engaged and enthusiastic, to celebrate their interests and what they have learned
  - they create positive identity, belonging and community not only for themselves, but for the school.

I mentioned false economy earlier and I urge you and your staff to analyze how deeply the absence of music programs will result in the absence of a positive focus and outlet for so many students and the potential negative impacts for individual students as well as the dynamics and culture of schools and the district. I think it is easily foreseeable that without music programs, district schools will see increased behavioural issues, increased need for learning supports and much higher incidence of mental health challenges and crises. In my experience, band performances are focal points for the broader school community.

As a parent, I am deeply thankful for the music programs in which my son has been able to participate and is currently participating. He has loved them and they drive the positive aspects of school for him. He has been fortunate to have had many dedicated teachers, but very few can hold a candle to his music teachers, who have been incredibly dedicated, creative, enthusiastic, inspiring and supportive of their students.

The pandemic has shown us that doing our part, innovating, being creative and collaborating are vital in our fast changing world. These are critical future-oriented skills - the demand for which will only grow in our industries and communities - and these are the very skills that are embedded in learning music.

Music programs are not a luxury. They are highly strategic investments that deliver short and long term value to students, schools and communities far beyond the specific deliverables of the music curriculum.

Sincerely,

Lisa Nakamura

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Music funding
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:48:13 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Lora McKay
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:13 AM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc: Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Music funding

To whom this may concern,

I am a parent of a student at Arbutus Middle School. I understand that the school board is currently

reviewing how to best address the budget deficit. I am writing today to express strong opposition to any cuts to the music programs currently offered through SD 61. Many students do not have access to music tuition outside of the school environment, as the cost of private instruction is prohibitive.

This has been an extremely difficult year for everyone. The arts have provided us all with solace and comfort during this challenging time (e.g. books, music, movies): both at home and in the classroom. The arts not only support connection and self-expression but they also help strengthen developing brains.

A five-year study held at the University of Southern California revealed that music instruction speeds up the maturation of the auditory pathway in the brain and increases its efficiency. And a study published out of the University of Kansas, showed that students in elementary schools with superior music education programs scored 22 percent higher in English and 20 percent higher in math scores, compared to schools with low-quality music programs.

https://news.usc.edu/102681/childrens-brains-develop-faster-with-music-training/
http://archive.news.ku.edu/2007/june/28/music.shtml
https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/the-benefits-of-music-education

The arts also provide a source of great pride and school connection. I have been so impressed with the passion, commitment and quality of teachers who run these programs. They often go above and beyond to help their students shine. For example, Arbutus Middle School recently won the junior vocals category for their performance of *J'entends le Moulin* (I Hear the Windmill) in the CBC's annual Canadian Music Class Challenge.

https://www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/two-vancouver-island-youth-music-programs-win-top-prizes-in-cbc-contest-1.24037108

The arts are not a frill. They are an essential component of an enriched education system that is committed to developing well-rounded, whole human beings who will become creative and innovative thinkers.

Sincerely,

Lora McKay

From: Kimberley Haas
To: Trustees
Subject: On behalf of Lorelai Haas
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:50:41 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Trustees,

My name is Lorelai Haas and I am a Grade 3 student at George Jay Elementary School.

i'm so excited for music in Grade 6 and 7 but if you make the cuts I won't get music so please do not.

Please include this in the board meeting agenda.

Lorelai Haas

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Music Program Advocacy
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:53:22 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Lori Lalli
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 2:24 PM **To:** Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Music Program Advocacy

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Hello Jordan Watters,
I wanted to say I am deeply saddened to hear of the cuts coming to the Middle School Music programs and Inclusive programs. These are super important for our children and their development. To make cuts to these programs is going to greatly hurt our children in their learning and their lives. Please do not take away creative outlets in the schools that provide our children with soul enriching knowledge and also help them perform better in other areas of learning. How can you

say that these programs are not worth having over any other type of program; it's so silly. Imagine a day without music or a day without art, where would we be as a society. I hope you all can see the importance of music and creativity especially during the last year. I'd say it helped save some people who found solace in music/art or had to rethink the way they made money or entertained their children. Music/art/dance is in all cultures and it is something you cannot deny unifies people. As for the Inclusive programs, we must keep these going. One of my sons has greatly benefited from having a student in his class that has Autism. It has made him see the importance of each of us despite any learning disability. He enjoys seeing this child improve and grow. This to me shows that including students with learning disabilities has helped reinforce my child's empathy, importance of inclusion, and encouraged him to make a friend that he may not have due to not understanding Autism in everyday life. As well I see that the students with learning disabilities get to feel their importance as an individual, and their right to learn and be included in a classroom. Please rethink these cuts and see the importance of standing up for our children's creativity and learning by keeping these ESSENTIAL programs going.
I would appreciate that this email be included in the board meeting agenda package please.
Thank you for listening,
Lori Lalli

From: Lucie Jackson
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd: Keep music in the schools!
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 6:37:33 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Sent from Lucie's iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Lucie Jackson
> **Date:** April 11, 2021 at 6:34:54 PM PDT
> **To:** Jordan Watters - jwatters@sd61.bc.ca, Diane McNally - dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca, Nicole Duncan - nduncan@sd61.bc.ca, Tom Ferris - tferris@sd61.bc.ca, Angie Hentze - ahentze@sd61.bc.ca, Elaine Leonard - eleonard@sd61.bc.ca, Ryan Painter - rpainter@sd61.bc.ca, Rob Paynter - rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca, Ann Whiteaker - awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca, <Superintendent of Schools: Shelley Green - sgreen@sd61.bc.ca, Deputy Superintendent of Schools: Deb Whitten - dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca, Associate Superintendent: Harold Caldwell - hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>
> **Cc:** trustees@sd61.bc.ca
> **Subject: Keep music in the schools!**
>
> To SD 61 School board and trustees,
>
> Please have this email added to the Board meeting agenda package
>
> I am voicing my concern over the proposed cuts to the music programs- particularly but not limited to those of the Middle schools here in Victoria.
>
> Music programs are NEEDED not a luxury in school programs. These programs are a huge help and emotional boost to many of the children and adults in our community. Music is actually the application of mathematics, physics and applied engineering so it can be a big part in helping students learn math and sciences. I have raised 3 children through SD61 music programs and currently have my grandson in the music program at Cedar Hill middle school. In particular, my youngest child would not have graduated had it not been for the music program at Spectrum Community high school. Dealing with mental health issues, band and musical theatre gave her refuse. Two ompassionate teachers (Pam Gerrits and Jamie Davis) went above and beyond in not only harbouring a safe and non-judgemental setting, but taught the valuable team building skills that she has

carried on in her workplace and now in post secondary training. Music also gives these children the skills from years of collaboration to be strong leaders and advocates in the community.
To make any cuts to the arts is making a great disservice to society.

Please reconsider any cuts to our programs.

Sincerely,

Lucie Jackson
Victoria BC

From:	Marita Dachsel
To:	Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Deb Whitten; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Trustees
Cc:	Murray Harris; Anja Rebstock; Marianne Ing; centralmusicnews; Kaehlen Allison; Jennifer Treble; Kevin Kerr
Subject:	concerns over proposed music cuts
Date:	Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:15:27 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Dear Shelley Green, Deb Whitten, Harold Caldwell, and the Board of Trustees,
I am the parent of three students in School District 61, one at Sir James Douglas Elementary, one at Central Middle School, and one at Esquimalt High School, and I would like to tell you about how important the music programs you are proposing to cut are to the lives of my children.
Both my boys participated in the strings program in grade five at Sir James Douglas. My daughter, currently in grade four, has been anticipating doing the same for years. She, too, would like to play the viola like her brothers. Without the strings program, none of my children would have this amazing opportunity; we could not afford to give our children private strings lessons. My eldest continued to play strings for his three years in middle school and my middle son plans to do the same. It has been amazing watching my kids be handed an instrument that is completely foreign to them (neither my husband nor I play) and grow tangibly as musicians. This alone gives them confidence, teaches determination and perseverance. We can all literally hear what practice—time, attention, and focus—can do in a way that studying for a test is unable to illustrate. What an incredible life lesson!
When our children were little, we often heard about how difficult middle school is. That it's a difficult age and time, and that we should expect a few hard years. We braced ourselves when our eldest entered Central Middle School, but instead of witnessing heartache, we saw our son blossom. He found his people and his passion, all thanks to the music program. His confidence and creativity grew. I knew how lucky we were, having a public catchment school with such a dedicated and talented music program.
I asked my son what he would have done if he'd gone to a middle school in a district that didn't have band. He said simply, "I would have died." It may read as hyperbole, but I can assure you it isn't. With the music program, he found community and purpose. He was encouraged to be creative, to be a leader, to take risks, to have fun, and to work hard.
At the end of grade seven, inspired by his fellow bandmates, he decided to write a piece for the band to play in grade eight. He worked on it for over six months, often receiving encouragement and advice from his music teachers. In March, just before Spring Break and the pandemic lock down, Band 8 premiered his song, *March of the Spartans*. Can you imagine? The generosity of the music teachers, specifically the brilliant Ross Ingstrup here, to nurture this young, eager student, allowing one of the two spots for the Band 8 recital to go to a student composer? The audience leapt to their feet, knowing what a gift this was and being fully supportive. My son has gone on to a composing opportunity with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra through their vsNEW program. There is absolutely no way he would be where he is today if he had started his band and strings opportunities in grade 8.

My second son is currently in grade seven, and while his opportunities have been diminished because of the pandemic, he still is involved with four school ensembles (Advanced Strings, Band 7, Junior Jazz, and Central Wood Ensemble). Being part of these ensembles gives him a sense of community and belonging in a time where these have almost disappeared.

Middle school is such an exciting time for these young scholars. They come from elementary schools and are flush with choice. This is when they get to try things out. They try band, try sports, try clubs. They're figuring out who they are, what they like. Children thrive when they find their thing. It's what gets them through the hard times of everything adolescence throws at them. To knowingly take that away from students is cruel. Take away middle school bands and they will effectively wipe out high school bands, too. Most students won't try band once they're in grade 8 because they will have already found something else that fits them. What a loss.

The school district rightly has made mental health a priority recently, and yet the choice to cut elementary strings and ukulele, and middle school bands clearly demonstrates that they only care about mental health on a superficial level. If they truly cared about the mental health of the students of SD61, not to mention their teachers, they would not even consider this. It's truly appalling.

Central Middle School is where my kids went/go/will go to, and is one of the largest in the district. Every student takes music. Pre-pandemic, over 50% of the 600+ students were involved in at least one ensemble or choir, of which they had 10. My eldest participated in 9 of them, and my middle is on his way to the same. This is just one of the ten middle schools. My heart is heavy thinking of all those students across the district potentially missing out.

I know you'll be receiving many impassioned letters and I am grateful that you took the time to read mine. I hope you will reconsider slashing music from the education of the children of Victoria. The ramifications of this cut will reverberate for generations.

Warmly,

Marita Dachsel

From: Huber M.
To: Trustees
Subject: SD61 funding for music education
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 5:01:26 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, Harold Caldwell, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Martina Huber, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Martina Huber

From: Melanie Hope
To: "Melanie Hope"; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell
Cc: Trustees
Subject: RE: Please protect music programs in Middle school
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 3:14:53 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my feedback below, in the board meeting agenda package. I've been advised I need to explicitly make this request. Thank you. Melanie.

From: Melanie Hope
Sent: April 10, 2021 7:43 PM
To: 'jwatters@sd61.bc.ca'; 'dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca'; 'nduncan@sd61.bc.ca'; 'tferris@sd61.bc.ca'; 'ahentze@sd61.bc.ca'; 'eleonard@sd61.bc.ca'; 'rpainter@sd61.bc.ca'; 'rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca'; 'awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca'; 'sgreen@sd61.bc.ca'; 'hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca'
Subject: Please protect music programs in Middle school

Reviewing the draft budget, I was truly heartbroken to read about proposed cuts to the middle school band program.

This program has enormous value. In my view, it is one of the most important programs in the school. The band program is teaching my daughter discipline, independence, commitment and perseverance. She has taken these skills into other areas of her life, including academics. I credit the program for bringing her out of her shell and teaching her that hard work pays off.

I hope my youngest child, who enters middle school in 2022, will have the same opportunity. It is honestly heartbreaking to think she may not.

Melanie Hope
parent of two SD61 kids (middle and elementary)

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: Music in SD61
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:53:07 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Natasha Gosling
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 2:35 PM
To: Natasha Gosling
Subject: Music in SD61

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, Harold Caldwell, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Natasha Gosling. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Natasha Gosling

From: Nicola Horwood
To: Trustees
Subject: What music means to me- For Tuesday"s Meeting
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:43:05 PM

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Please include in Tuesday night's agenda package.

Greetings SD61 Trustees,
My name is Nicola Horwood, and I am a past student of Willows, Lansdowne and Oak Bay.

Throughout my time in school I was actively involved in most music classes that were offered. At Willows I sang in Mrs. Evans fantastic choir and was in her musical. In middle school, Mr. Rawson and Mr. G were my favorite teachers! I remember running in between songs in jazz band so that I could play trombone, drums and piano all in one concert! I remember competing in the whistler festival where my Grade 8 band got the "platinum" honor and the amazing friendships that were built. I also remember my first concert with "Nerd Herd", my small group choir at Lansdowne and when we wowed the high school students by our performance of "Chile con carne" by the real group.

My experience at Willows and Lansdowne encouraged me to not only participate in almost all the Oak Bay Choirs and Bands but be able to sing in Chamber Choir at my University. To this day, I find joy and rejuvenation through singing in my medical school choir and acapella group.

I was born into Island Ukuleles! In fact, I think I was in my mom's, Tina Horwood, belly during a ukulele trip to Hawaii. It goes without saying that ukulele is in my genes, please let us carry that on to the next generation of Horwoods and dozens of other families! I was initiated into the Island Ukulele B group in Grade 1 and continued through the program until the end of Grade 12. Ukulele trips took me to places around the world that I never would've visited otherwise, especially our unforgettable trip to Panama.

I can say without a doubt that I would not be who I am today without school music programs. Music gave me motivation to go to school and is where I met some of my closest friends to this day.

Please save all elementary, middle and high school music programs! They give students life!

Thank you,

Nicola Horwood
UBC Medicine '23

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Cc: Kelly Gorman
Subject: Fw: Input to inform 2021-22 budget
Date: Monday, April 19, 2021 10:46:30 AM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Nina Barton
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 5:43 PM
To: Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Input to inform 2021-22 budget

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resending - to request: please include this letter in the board meeting agenda package. Thanks

Dear School Trustees, Superintendent Green, Deputy Superintendent Whitten and Associate Superintendent Caldwell,

We are parents of two students in SD61 - our son is in Grade 9 (Vic High) and our daughter is in Grade 6 (Shoreline). Along with a great many other children in this district, they are both active in the band programs at their schools. In an incredibly difficult year for everyone and despite huge obstacles, the band programs have adapted and thrived. In a year when our kids tried to deal with being more isolated and alone, the band programs were able to maintain some semblance of normalcy by bringing kids together to learn and play music.

Eliminating the band programs in Grades 6 and 7 is wrong, and this would not be in the interest of students. The music programs in grade 6 and 7 were the reason my son went to school - because the band program at Central Middle School was so excellent, the teachers were so gifted, that practically everyone wanted to be in band in grade 6. By grade 7, naturally there were fewer kids joining band, but there were still three full Grade 7 bands, a string program and a choir to join, and all were busy and popular. The school concerts were huge, and incredible just in terms of logistics. In the grade 6 fall concert, kids who had likely never even seen a saxophone up close before were playing a whole song with one, just a few months later, in front of their friends and parents and grandparents and the whole school community. By grade 8, the three bands had been playing together for three years and sounded fantastic. My son now plays with musicians from grades 9 through 12 in several bands at the excellent Vic High music program. He is still best friends with the kids he met in Grade 6 band. Before this, he struggled to make friends. If you have trouble thinking of music programs as critically important for kids, think about team sports - this is their team.

Our daughter currently plays flute and violin, in grade six at Shoreline. She loves band and strings, and it's the main reason she wants to go to school - even getting up early to go to band practice before school starts without complaints. She learned violin in the excellent Grade 5 program, as well as ukulele and recorder and choir.

Learning music in schools isn't just about the music. Kids in band and strings learn skills like discipline and patience. Learning music improves their overall brainpower, increases their ability to see patterns and make mental connections, and helps them build confidence and develop social skills. Because most district decision makers don't work directly with students, I imagine it can be hard for you to see the benefits of music programs, which may make it easier for you to make the decision to cut the program from schools.

Please don't do this! How much does the music program actually cost, per student? The "savings" and "reinvestment" in doing away with music programs is false - you are not "saving" anything if you remove everything important to kids - and by your actions you are also telling kids that their interests don't matter. Don't remove one of the best things about middle school. It's time for us to stop devaluing music and the arts in our schools.

Sincerely,

Nina Barton and Matt Pease

From: Noah Gabel
To: Trustees
Subject: For Tuesday's Board Meeting Agenda
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:25:16 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To whom it may concern,
I am a high school student who's gone through the Shoreline Middle School band program and is part of the Esquimalt High one. The proposed budget cuts to middle school music programs are very worrisome to music-lovers like myself for which music plays a large role in our lives. Middle schools are a natural entry point for like-minded students to collaborate and connect with one another. The effective removal of these programs would be a tragic not just for middle schools, but for high schools and universities which rely on students in order to run their respective programs. The barrier of entry for these programs would be heavily increased. Music is also paramount during the pandemic that we currently face, because it allows for stress-relief and is a creative outlet. Many students simply *need* music for their mental health and well-being.
I am aware that the district budget is in a deficit and there are cuts that need to be made. I only ask that you tread lightly in doing so. You are in a position to affect a lot of people, both positively and negatively.
Don't shortchange us students. We are the reason you have jobs.
Noah Gabel

From:	Noelle Davis
To:	Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; rob.fleming.mla@leg.bc.ca
Subject:	Keep Music in Middle Schools in SD61
Date:	Sunday, April 11, 2021 6:19:41 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, Harold Caldwell, the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61, Education Minister, Jennifer Whiteside and my local MLA, Rob Fleming, My name is Noelle Davis, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum during a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Noelle Davis

Board of Trustees - trustees@sd61.bc.ca
Jordan Watters - jwatters@sd61.bc.ca
Diane McNally - dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca
Nicole Duncan - nduncan@sd61.bc.ca
Tom Ferris - tferris@sd61.bc.ca
Angie Hentze - ahentze@sd61.bc.ca
Elaine Leonard - eleonard@sd61.bc.ca

From: Bam
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include this email in the agenda package for the board meeting regarding music in the schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:43:40 PM
Attachments: Since music has so much to do with the molding of character.pdf
Music is.pdf
Bam Isla.jpeg
CARD.jpeg

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To the Trustees of the education of the young students of our city,

Please include this email in the agenda packages for the board meetings regarding music in the schools.
I am asking you to take the time to read the PDF attachments and to respond to me to say that this was done and that my whole email-letter was presented.

Please take the time to read this fully at your respective meetings, as you are the trustees of the education of our children, and you owe it to our entire society to learn about this. So, please, humble yourselves with the time that it takes and read all of this very carefully.

Thank you.

"Since music has so much to do with the molding of character, it is necessary that we teach it to our children." Aristotle
Where there is great love, much can be accomplished." "We are not educating these children to become professional musicians, but to be decent and fine human beings."

Shinichi Suzuki – world music educator

I am a private music teacher in this city and at a lesson today, my 14 year old student quoted Beethoven to me: "To have a country, you need culture and to have culture, you need music." Beethoven from a 14 year old who went on to tell me just how important a music education is and what it does for a student.

I have nothing to gain or to loose from your decision about whether and exactly how you include a music education for our young people and to the children of this society, but they are now on pins and needles at a time when the world's stresses are upon their shoulders and in their futures, and in the midst of a pandemic that has literally rocked their entire whole world. You need to listen to them, because they are the sages and they hold wisdom for you.

You owe it to the children of this city to really listen to the students and to learn something about how important it is to make music an integral part of their whole education from the youngest to the graduating classes. You are making decisions about their whole lives and about the future of the society in which we all live.

The benefits of music education in public schools extend much past this email. Music education in our public schools is an incredibly important cause, and a life-changing one that is worth fighting for, preserving and even growing. Music changes lives. It certainly has changed mine. Any cut to music funding to music programs in our schools will be a profoundly impactful and truly negative disservice to our students and future generations. It is unacceptable.

If we give up on the arts and human expression, then we will have failed.

Please feel free to contact me directly should you have further questions.

Sincerely,

--
Armand S. Birk, BMus

From: Armand Birk
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed Cuts to Elementary and Middle School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:11:51 PM

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Dear Board of Trustees and Superintendent at School District 61,

I kindly ask that my letter be included in the correspondence section at the next board meeting. Thank you for your time in considering these important issues and accepting feedback.

A social media post by the VIctoria Symphony explained that the School District is proposing and considering serious cuts to music education in the district. I'm proud to have been a student at the public schools in my hometown of Victoria from K-12 and value the music programs that I experienced in those schools that led me to being a classical musician today. I am deeply concerned with the proposed changes as I believe that they will have a profoundly negative impact on the students. I understand that the situation of a 7-million-dollar deficit imposes difficult decisions to make or propose, however I strongly believe that music should not be considered as a place for cuts.

I was lucky to have access to music education in public school from a young age while growing up in Victoria. The wonderful and eclectic array of musicians that call Victoria home, from classical, to indie rock, to jazz and beyond provided me with foundational experiences that I carry with me. We had even hosted the wonderful Symphony Splash! The wonderful opportunities I was afforded through my public school music education enabled me to continue my studies in music at advanced levels across Canada and at the post-secondary level in Alberta. I am returning to BC this next school year to pursue studies in Orchestral Conducting after spending 7 years in Alberta.

What I have learned in all of this time is that Music has the innate power and ability to truly change someone's life. Music more than its' entertainment value to audiences. Musicians dedicate their lives to perfecting their craft, and sharing this amazing art form with others. Music is the most sincere and true reflection of our deepest, most intimate emotions. Music is a way of overcoming adversity, facing the greatest fears and challenges of your life. and coming out on the other side. Music is a universal language that can bring unity, love for one another and a sense of community. Music is absolutely essential to the progression and development of children at all ages. Music cultivates the soul and spirit. Music is who we are as a people.

Countless studies have proven that early exposure to music and access to music education can measurably result in better academic outcomes for students. Engaging the creative side of the brain at an early age increases creativity, collaboration, attention to detail, innovation, understanding of complex concepts, etc. Access to music at a young age has also proven to have profoundly important social impacts, as demonstrated by programs like Sistema, and the school partnerships with the Victoria Symphony.

From:	Arianna Pennock
To:	Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Ann Whiteaker; Rob Paynter; Ryan Painter; Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard
Subject:	DON"T CUT THE MUSIC PROGRAMS
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 6:31:14 PM

To Shelley Green, Harold Caldwell, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Arianna Pennock, and I am a grade 8 student at Cedar Hill Middle School. I am writing to you about the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music.

I have been taking music classes since grade 5 and can't imagine my life without it. I started playing Violin in grade 5 and continued with that until Covid hit. I was so excited to explore all the music opportunities available to me in middle school. I chose to learn how to play the trumpet and it is now such a huge part of my life. Band, Strings and Choir became my favorite time of the day and I look forward to seeing the friendly faces of the music teachers. It doesn't matter how hard my day has been, my music classes were always there to cheer me up. The sound of the music, the feeling of being part of a music family, and the positive energy from these classes has been the highlight of my years at Cedar Hill.

The people who hold these teaching positions that you are planning on cutting are more than just teachers. They have become role models, a support system during the hardest year of my life, they will always hold a special place in my heart. Please consider how your decisions negatively affect not only the teachers and their families, but us students as well.

This pandemic has been very difficult for everybody. The one thing I could count on to get me through was music. If I hadn't been lucky enough to receive a music education at school, I don't know how I would have managed. All that I've learned about music from these outstanding teachers changed me for the better and has become a part of me.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Please reconsider,

Arianna Pennock

From: Annette Giles
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep out music in the schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:26:21 PM

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To whom it may concern,

My family is writing to you to express our concern with the proposed cuts to our music programs in our schools. It is shocking and saddening to hear.

In this climate of COVID we need to hold onto our music program for the children's mental health. It is proven that music can be very therapeutic. More and more we see younger children with mental health crisis and coping challenges. Music brings kids together...challenges and enriches their minds. It enhances the school day.

I would like this email to be included in your Board meeting Agenda for your meeting on April 13th.

Our trustees need to hear our voices and our concerns over this very upsetting proposal to cut music programs.

Out of extreme concern,
Annette, Andre, Arden and Amber Giles

From: anne kishiyama
To: Trustees
Subject: For Board Meeting (Correspondence) Tuesday, April 13th- RE: Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:13:39 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To the Trustees of SD 61;
I urge you to consider other ways to balance the school district's budget deficit than cutting music programs at the elementary and middle school levels.
There is a lot of research that points to involvement in music as being beneficial for children's over-all cognitive abilities and mental health. Music also encourages team work, and builds social skills, creates a close-knit group of like-minded peers, keeps children and youth constructively occupied and having fun, and provides them with a creative outlet that they can access through their entire lives. As a community and society, we need to continue to support school programs that will provide our future citizens a well- rounded education and contribute to the success of those with diverse abilities, rather than adopting a narrow "reading, writing, arithmetic" approach. Despite all the wonderful benefits to children and youth being involved in music, it is still seen as an "extra", and something that isn't essential.
While families of means can afford to send their children to private music lessons, school music programs are the only way that many average or struggling families can involve their children in music.
The music program at my daughter's school has been absolutely critical over the past year during the Covid-19 pandemic. While regular classes and timetables have changed, the choir, musical theatre, and band programs have been a steadying influence for her where she still feels connected to the school community and engaged in learning. I can't imagine the past year without our school music program and it's excellent teachers!
Learning an instrument or learning to sing is a skill that builds over years, and these are skills that are easier to learn at a younger age. Children who start with some exposure to a music program in the elementary and middle school years are much more likely to continue with music into high school and beyond. Making cuts to elementary and middle school music programs will mean that the current cohort of children in elementary and middle school will not take music when they reach their high school years. If the school board were looking for a way to completely remove music from the schools forever, removing it at the elementary and middle school levels would certainly be the first step!
There has got to be a better way to balance the budget! Please do not make cuts to the music program.
Anne Kishiyama
(Parent of an SD 61 student currently attending Reynolds Secondary)
Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: Anne Hansen
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include this letter for Apr 13 board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:41:34 PM

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Hello

I am a regular patron of the Pacific Opera of Victoria, and Victoria Symphony.

It has come to my attention that you are considering less support for children's musical education in the school system.

This is a huge mistake, and insult to children and their creative talents.

In the middle of a pandemic, many children and adults are discovering music, and deeper ways to develop their musical abilities. This, or any other time, is not when their creative avenues should be abruptly cut off.

Keep, and increase, funding and support for musical education.

Yours truly

Anne Hansen

"The most dangerous worldview is the worldview of those who have not viewed the world." — Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859)

"I don't want power. I want change." — Doris Anderson

From: Angela Bassage
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Programs in Schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:18:48 PM

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Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting

I can understand the need to reduce costs but cutting the budget on music programs in the public school system will prove to be detrimental to the well-rounded education we hope to give our youngsters, especially those who have the innate talent waiting to be developed. I urge you to support ALL courses that promote creative expression - whether music, dance, writing or art - within the school system. Many thanks.
Angela Bassage

Amy Thede

From: Amy Thede
To: Shelley Green; Trustees; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61 - Do not cut funding!!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:30:54 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Amy Thede, and I am a community member and hopefully future parent here in Victoria. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

The benefits of arts and music in child development are well-known and documented. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community. Music is a crucial part of all cultures, and creative expression is critical to children learning about themselves, their culture, and enriching the entire community.

During my elementary and high school years, music was essential to my enjoyment of school, my confidence, and my overall academic success. I was in choir from grade one, band from grade 6, and later in advanced orchestra and multiple musical classes and extracurricular activities throughout high school that our public school was so fortunate to have. These have remained some of my best memories over two decades later, and some of the friends I made in music remain friends to this day.

Cutting student centered curriculum demonstrates that the board is ignoring crucial evidence that music is critical for children in all aspects of academic and social success in school and in life beyond. These cuts will impact these students for their entire lives.The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not remove the opportunities to learn music from these students. It will be detrimental to us all.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

From: Amy Jones
To: Amy Jones
Subject: SAVE THE MUSIC IN SCHOOLS!!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:05:33 AM

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Dear all Board of Trustee members of SD61,

I am a proud Mt Doug grad of 2005 started playing the violin in Grade 4 at Margaret Jenkins because a lovely conductor named Trevor Jones (Mr Jones to us), came to my classroom to demonstrate the violin and I was picked as a volunteer to try it. I ran home that day and told my parents I wanted to play the violin.

Fast forward to Grade 8 at Landsdowne Junior Secondary and the strings program merged into the High School Festival Orchestra where all the junior and senior secondary schools came together a couple times a year to rehearse and perform at numerous events around town. What a great way to meet people! I have made lifelong friends as a result of being part of strings in school and I hope many more generations of students get to experience the same camaraderie as I did.

Some amazing experiences I have had included being part to the world's largest orchestra in 2000:
https://www.google.ca/amp/s/www.cbc.ca/amp/1.200231

I've also had the chance to travel to Seattle, San Diego and Ottawa with the orchestra to perform and these trips were so fun and created so many memories that I still think about today.

I can't believe the music programs in school are at risk of being cut AGAIN and I would strongly encourage you to watch this video (Silence of the Strings) that was made back in 2000 when this was on the board of trustees agenda yet again.... listen to the words these people are speaking as they pertain to music and kids. Kids NEED music. They NEED something that challenges them in a way that academia doesn't. Many of the people who are interviewed and participated in this film, myself included, still play our instruments and are in still in contact, TWENTY ONE years later... that's the power of music.
https://vimeo.com/517976106

Please consider voting to make cuts in other areas in order to save the music program, especially strings.

I truly appreciate your time and consideration of this letter and I hope you are all doing well,

Amy Jones

From: Amy Culliford
To: Trustees
Subject: SD61 Music Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:18:39 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs.

For children from less privileged families, music taught in schools is their only opportunity to experience this amazing art form and means of self expression. By cutting these programs, you are doing a great disservice to families and children who are considered to be low income.

I expect if there are cuts to the arts, there will also be cuts to sports, sciences, unnecessary management/admin positions, etc.? The arts should not be the first on the chopping block.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Amy Culliford

From: iris summerwood
To: Trustees
Subject: Music budget cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:58:46 PM

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I would like this letter submitted and read please.
Trustees,
I have been fortunate when my children were young to be able to afford private music lessons and now that I am not I have been deeply grateful that they could learn from their dedicated music teachers.
There is no doubt in my mind they have excelled in school due to the concentration learned through music practice.
It seems obvious to me that cutting music budgets during a Pandemic is shortsighted at best and negligent at worst.
Please don't be on the wrong side of history on this important issue.
Amy Allard

There are many younger and confident musicians in grades lower than me. I have gotten the chance to play with many of them in different styles such as my school's auditioned band and our jazz band. I want to be able to see them exceed in music next year and following into highschool. Music has influenced my academics greatly, because of reading music and being able to think of things in different ways, I'm always creative in projects and other academics. I honestly don't know what I would've done without the influence of music in my life. For as long as I can remember, I've loved making music. I hope to be able to continue this in school and see my sister and younger friends share the same joy towards music without the worry of it being cut.

Again, so many kids I know only come to school because of the joy in being able to play music with fellow students. I hope you'll take this into serious consideration before making the mistake of cutting the music programs.

Thanks for reading if you got this far, I'm hoping you'll make the right decision and find other ways to deal with the budgets. I know other options may not seem as good but I promise, cutting the music programs will greatly affect many students and the academic assets of our school systemes.

Thanks again

-Amika

From: The Crawbirds
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd: Music Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:38:36 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting

Hi, My name is Amika Crawford, I'm a grade 8 at Central Middle School. I play tenor saxophone in 3 of our school bands. Personally the best part of my day is getting to play in band with my teachers and fellow students. I get up at 6:00 am three mornings a week to play in school bands. The only thing that gets me excited for school is knowing that I get to play music with other young musicians. I know this may seem like I'm over exaggerating but honestly the best part of my day in school is spent in the band room. I have a few questions I'm really hoping you will think over.
1. Do you have any musicians on your school board?
2. If any of you played in school bands do you remember the thrill of playing? That's what we feel everytime we play together. Sometimes when I'm playing for fun with my friends, I can't stop smiling and laughing when one of us gets a melody right or a rythme right for the first time (unfortunately this makes it hard to keep playing)

Imagine the amount of kids such as myself that would fall behind in school work, personally I wouldn't be able to find any motivation because one of the only reasons I attend school is being able to make music. For the most part, cutting the music programs won't affect me as I'm going into high school next year. I'm hoping that high school bands will keep going. I've been playing tenor sax for three years now but I've played saxophones since I was 4. I've played piano, trombone, ukulele and have always loved making music of any kind.

My younger sister who's in 5th grade has been hoping to play in a band at Central Middle School since she heard the stories I came home with. I always talked about my music teachers and the joy of being part of that community. My band teachers have had a huge influence on my school work as well. They've always encouraged us to play and work hard to exceed in academics and music. Although one of our music teachers is currently out, we always remember the times he made us laugh, the ways he explained 16th notes, rests and when he showed us ways to look at music differently. Personally I remember the moment in 6th grade when I was having trouble playing a dotted quarter note and my teacher came next to me, took out his tenor and played alongside me explaining how to count it. Since then, three years later I count them in that way. These moments for many of my fellow young musicians have made a huge impact on how we look at music.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Alexandra Gros
(she/her)
TTOC in SD61

From:	Alexandra Gros
To:	Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green
Subject:	Proposed Budget Cuts
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 11:11:31 AM

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Alexandra Gros, and I am a teacher in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61. I grew up playing piano and taking band in school and the skills that I learned impacted my life so profoundly. I honestly don't believe that I would have done so well academically in post-secondary. I was privileged though in the fact that my parents could afford the thousands of dollars it took to put me through the Royal Conservatory all the way up to the ARCT. And if you take away music programs in the schools, then children who aren't as lucky or privileged as I am won't be given the same advantages.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

April 11, 2021

Attention SD61 Board of Trustees,

I am writing to you out of concern for proposed budget cuts to the music programs.

I have 3 children currently attending View Royal Elementary, Shoreline Middle School and Spectrum High School. One of my children also attended Colquitz Middle School for 3 years. At each of these schools our experience has been that the Music/Arts Programs have been the heart and soul of the school. They are what brings the school together as a community.

All 3 of my children have benefited tremendously from the Music Programs that they have participated in. It has expanded their interests, social connections and most importantly their self confidence. They have excelled in music and I anticipate this will be a skill that they carry on with for the rest of their life. In Elementary School all of our children have learned the recorder, the ukulele, and joined choir which has led them to explore piano outside of school and join Middle/High School Band playing both the Saxophone and the Clarinet. They would not have had these opportunities outside of the school environment.

During COVID-19 as well as transitioning between schools, music has been a constant for our children that has provided motivation to attend school and provided a sense of normalcy during a very stressful time for them. In particular our middle son who was struggling to attend his first year of Middle School (with few friends transitioning with him) found comfort knowing that he would be able to attend Band.

I implore the Board of Trustees to reconsider cuts to Music Programs. I have seen first hand how important these programs are for our children's social, emotional and cognitive development.

Sincerely,

Alana Cornett
BA CYC
Apples and Bananas Child Care

From: Adrian Mohareb
To: Trustees; grace.lore.MLA@leg.bc.ca; educ.minister@gov.bc.ca
Subject: Please work to maintain music funding for SD61
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:44:36 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Dear Minister Whiteside, MLA Lore and Trustees of SD61,

I understand this year has been incredibly difficult. That there are costs that have to be borne that were not there in the past. However, I noted in the SD61 budget that it is planned to reduce music programming funding by approximately $1.3 million. I strongly urge SD61 to find other efficiencies, and to work with Min Whiteside and our MLAs to identify other sources for funding the music programs of the school district. One of the reasons we are sending our son to MacAulay Elementary for kindergarten next year, apart from French Immersion, is that there is a music program on site; it was one of the biggest parts of our decision, knowing how music and arts education broadens a child's perspective. I encourage Government and the School District to collaborate to maintain these music programs.

Thank you very much,

Adrian Mohareb

Adrian
ps. Because this is a special date in my granddaughter's life I will remember your actiions for ever

CC:

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education
Grace Lore, MLA

--
Good enough for now; Safe enough to try. Olivia Meyonette Sweeney

Adrian Dolling (him/he)

From: Adrian Dolling
To: Trustees
Cc: EDUC.Minister@gov.bc.ca; grace.lore.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Subject: SD61 Board Meeting April 13, 2021: email correspondence for the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:00:33 PM

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Dear Trustees,

Subject: **My special reason to preserve music in the schools programming**

Tomorrow, April 13th, my granddaughter turns one year old. She is a child of the pandemic, for ever deprived of the usual formative first year experiences with other children. She will enter the school system in four years time.

She is also a privileged child: well educated in-work parents; supportive grandparents; many aunties and uncles in her parents generation.

However, it is not possible to experience a full music life without community.

When I was a child my first music was in grade one, with recorder and singing. Later there was part singing in a school choir, and a children's choir and a few years of private piano lessons. Then secondary school - and effectively no music programming. It was to lead to a lifelong loss - no guitar, no piano, no choir, no musicals.

I was lucky, and priviledged and managed to clamber back into choirs during and ever since my university days.

As I look at the world now, with our concerns about COVID hot-spots, I turn this rich-world view upside down, and look from Africa where there are so few vaccines available, and two friends of mine have died of COVID, and see our Canadian wealth and vaccine availability.

I also look from my priviledged world view and see the opportunities supported through the connection to music, and how important this is for neural development in your young charges, and the disproportionate impact this will have on the kids who need most support - those in families who cannot afford (or find) private lessons that I was lucky enough to experience.

How on earth is it possible that we can choose, through you, my elected representatives, to eliminate that which makes us whole in this time of need.

I urge you to vote NO! to the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school programs and help to maintain accessibility for all young people.

Kind regards,

To: The School board

Hello My name is Abigail Davies I am in grade 5 at Oahlands elemantry School. And I have come to write to you that I absolty hate your idea of cuting all music Progams for grade 5,6,7, and some for grade 8. because I Love Music and Playing the cello and my brother and sister who are in grade 7 and 9 Play the Saksophone and the trumpet and I Want to play the trombone but because of Your idea We can't. I was looking so forward to it. Also my Music teacher Mrs. Palson said that teaching grade 5 Strings is her favorite Part of he Week. So Please Please Please

do not Cut the music Progams.

Sinserly - Abigail. M. Davies.

OPERA PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA

12 April 2021

School District 61 Trustees - Email: trustees@sd61.bc

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting

Dear School District 61 Trustees

RE: Proposed cuts to elementary and middle school music programs

I am writing on behalf of Pacific Opera Victoria to express our concern about the proposed cuts to your elementary and middle school music programs. We urge you to reconsider.

Music education is an extremely valuable resource to children and young people of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Music education should not be elitist and only available to children in families who are fortunate enough to afford private tuition.

We believe that the short-term financial gain that the proposed cuts will bring to the School District will be at the expense of the longer-term benefits that a music education will provide to elementary and middle school children. Music not only helps children to grow in self esteem, but it also builds essential skills such as co-operation, teamwork and patience.

The proposed cuts, which will affect a variety of music programs and other important musical initiatives, such as the *VS Education Concerts* music program with the highly acclaimed Victoria Symphony, will have a detrimental and lasting effect on music and culture in Victoria. Making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

By voting NO to these proposed cuts, which will restrict elementary and middle school music programs, you will help to maintain accessibility for all young people. Please vote NO.

Yours faithfully

Ian Rye

Chief Executive Officer

250.382.1641 | INFO@PACIFICOPERA.CA | 925 BALMORAL ROAD | VICTORIA BC, V8T 1A7 | PACIFICOPERA.CA

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Evie Beiderwieden <> **Sent:** Sunday, April 11, 2021 8:47 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: I want to take band next year

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

My name is Evie Beiderwieden, and I am a student at Gordon Head Middle School. I am in 6th grade, and band is one of my favourite subjects. It's the favourite part of my week. I like band because my teacher is super funny and I love that, and he gives us the exact right feedback to make the songs really nice, and he puts in the time with us. I like the challenge of learning a new instrument, and I like making music and the feeling when I play a song. I also really love singing, and I was really looking forward to singing with the choir next year. Please don't cut middle school band and choir.

I would like my email to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

From,
Evie

From:	Jordan Watters
To:	Evie Beiderwieden
Cc:	Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject:	Re: I want to take band next year
Date:	Monday, April 19, 2021 2:41:13 PM

Dear Evie,

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us - it is especially helpful when we hear directly from students like you!

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates and an FAQ as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

Please include this letter in the agenda package for future Board Meetings regarding the 2021-2022 SD61 budget.

Sincerely,

Kathryn

Kathryn Allan-Kwasnica
Chair - Parent's Advisory Council - Cloverdale Traditional School

CLOVERDALE
Traditional School

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

April 11, 2021

Dear Trustees:

I'm writing to you on behalf of the PAC for Cloverdale Traditional School. We have grave concerns with the current budget "savings" being proposed by SD61 staff. We are most concerned with the significant cuts to music education in SD61, in particular the elimination of the strings program and band programs; the "savings" being proposed for Inclusion, in particular the "Education Assistant Staffing Adjustment"; and, the "savings" being suggested for Community Link.

Without clarification from SD61 staff, much of this proposed budget is hard to interpret, therefore we implore you to ask the correct clarifying questions of district staff and to reject proposed "savings" that will surely have harmful impacts to SD61 students.

I am fortunate to have been "born and raised" in this beautiful city of Victoria and I was a student in this school district in the 1980s and 1990s. This nearly identical proposal to cut music education, in particular the band program, was put forth as a budget savings when I was a student in Elementary school. Thankfully, music education's importance was recognized, and this motion was terminated at that time, because it was the wrong thing to do. This remains true today.

Furthermore, we strongly encourage you to challenge district staff to give you a full understanding of what "Educational Assistant Staffing Adjustment" actually means. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that our EAs do not make a living wage with their current hours and most of them need to supplement their positions with a second job. We need more hours for our EAs not fewer. In addition, any cuts to Community Link is of great concern, as the impacts will be felt by the most vulnerable of students. Again, we implore you to please seek clarification from district staff regarding these proposed cost "savings".

Finally, "Improved Student Success" is noted by District Staff as a goal of this budget, however, the proposed "savings" are surely to be detrimental to student success and support if they are accepted by the Board. Our PAC recognizes the difficult position the Board faces in needing to balance the budget; however, there has to be a better way. This proposed budget is not acceptable and we implore you to reject it and find a way to balance the budget without detrimental cuts.

From: zoe kankewitt
To: Trustees
Subject: Middle school music
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 2:57:45 PM

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Hello,
I am a parent to a grade 9 daughter at Reynolds and a grade 7 boy at cedar hill middle. Both of my children played strings in grade 5, and they both have been playing saxophone and French horn with concert band from grade 6 on.

I am devastated to hear of the budget cut proposal that will obliterate the entire middle school music program. My children love their music, they are part of a community, they have the opportunity to travel with band and they have made many friends and learned to read and play music through school district 61s music program.

Their school experience would not be the same without that enrichment of the music program. I asked my daughter that is in grade 9, how she would've felt if she did not have the opportunity to play band in grade 6, she said she would have been absolutely saddened. Music has given them a great sense of self-esteem. My children are lucky and the music cut proposal may not specifically affect them. However, I have nieces and nephews that are going to miss out on an enormous learning experience.

There are going to be massive consequences if the middle school music programs are completely cut, it will greatly impact children who's families can't afford private music lessons.

The music program is such an integral part of Cedar Hill middle school, I cannot imagine the school without this program. The teachers are passionate and Put their all into teaching the kids a love for music.

Please reconsider your decision about cutting the music program. And please share this email to anyone who is able to stop this massive budget cut.

Zoe MacDougall
(Passionate music parent)

Sent from my iPhone

make new friends and share in the love of music and band. It is a form of art and gives people the skills to endure personal challenges.
Most importantly it gives children from dysfunctional families a safe
And non judgmental place to be for even a short time.
My own children are now in grade 6 and 7 and have had the privilege of being involved in band and music for All of their school years up until now. I would hate for other children NOT to have the same opportunities!!
Thank you for your time! You have my permission to share my letter at the next board meeting or any other event.
Victoria Valencia

From: Jordan Watters
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: Fw: proposed budget cuts to band and music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:39:39 PM

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Victoria Valencia
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 12:19 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: proposed budget cuts to band and music programs

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To Jordan Waters;
I am writing this letter to express my astonishment at the news that I just received regarding the proposed band and music cuts to middle schools!!
I realize that 1 opinion is not enough to change the world by itself but it can be enough to start the change with the help of others I genuinely hope that will be the case in this situation!
Band and music are a vital part of a child's education. They learn new skills and have the opportunity to express themselves through music and band. They have the opportunity to

Jason and Tara Poilievre

April 10, 2021

Board of Trustees
Greater Victoria School District Board of Education
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
V8Z 1E8

Dear Board of Trustees Members,

It has recently come to my attention that the Board of Trustees is considering cutting funding to music programming in excess of $1,000,000. Even worse, these proposed cuts include the elimination of funding for program administration of the Island Ukuleles program.

Island Ukuleles has been a staple in our community since 1977, offering generations of youth in Greater Victoria a safe and welcoming place in which to learn, grow and make music. As a parent of a child involved in this programming, I'm compelled to speak up and explain to you and the other board members how incredibly important this program is.

Serving well over 125 children and youth each year, the program offers more than instruction in music; it offers a community and a place for our children to learn about teamwork, giving back to the community and finding a place to belong. The program is also supported by a Society made up of parents, past participants and other community members who see the value that Island Ukuleles offers not only to the vast amounts of youth involved, but also to the community at large. Society members volunteer countless hours fundraising, coordinating the program and organizing concerts, many of which are open to the public. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, some of our favourite concerts were held in long-term care homes for the elderly, and they cannot wait for this to be over so that we can return. None of this would be possible without the invaluable support of the district teachers who administer the program.

Personally, my daughter is proud of her involvement with Island Ukuleles and plans to continue in the program for the foreseeable future. As a child with her own set of anxieties and challenges, she is proud of her music and accomplishments both at Island Ukuleles and in the Strings Program in grade 5 at Cloverdale Traditional. If these programs are cancelled, our family cannot afford to pay for her to continue with these instruments under private tutorage. She would be forced to self-teach and I'm afraid that wouldn't last. I have seen first-hand the giving back of the older students to the new, younger students in the ukulele program. There is pride and accomplishment in this approach, more than students learn in any core subject at school.

Simply put, the Island Ukuleles program provides a staggering benefit to the youth in Greater Victoria and is heavily supported by the community. To withdraw the Board of Education's support in this important program would negatively impact hundreds, if not thousands of people in our region. We have found ways to continue through the pandemic, thanks mainly to the passionate teachers involved in the program. Please don't cut our last lifeline and end this crucial programming for our children, who are struggling more than ever.

Sincerely,

Tara and Jason Poilievre

Susanne Reul-Zastre

Susanne Reul-Zastre

From: Susanne Reul-Zastre
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include in tomorrow"s board meeting agenda package - SD61 Music Education
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 4:18:43 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Board of Trustees,

Please include this email/letter in tomorrow's board meeting agenda package.

I was saddened to see the proposed changes in the 2021-2022 budget, cutting the equivalent of over 9 full-time music teaching contracts across the district, including beginning strings, ukulele programs and more. I would like to make my voice heard now to ask you to re-consider this proposal.

My older son, Robert Zastre (2019 Oak Bay High Graduate), first encountered band and strings in Grade 6 at Lansdowne middle school, taking a year of Euphonium and then switching to percussion for Grades 7 and 8.

As band was hands-down his favourite class throughout middle school, I had to make an appointment with the Principal at Vic High to ask in person for a transfer to Oak Bay High School, so that Robert could continue band classes inside the time-table in a linear system. Unfortunately, Robert had a very rough year academically during Grade 10 because of mental health issues. When it became apparent later in the fall that he should have been signed up for Workplace math 10 instead of regular math, a time table revision required him to make a very tough decision: which class was he going to give up to facilitate this switch – band or film & television? He chose band without hesitation, considering that his dream was always to attend the Vancouver Film School after graduation.

I feel that band during Grade 10 literally saved his life – the safety and welcoming atmosphere in the band room, the companionship of others, the teachers' encouragement, and the sense of achievement after concerts will be with him for the rest of his life. By the end of Grade 11 he had also managed to completely turn things around academically and was proud to be on the Honour Roll – and I credit band for that!

In conclusion, I would like to mention that Robert was indeed able to follow his dream and now studies at the Vancouver Film School. I am convinced that he was able to transfer 100% the skill set he acquired at band (accountability, flexibility, responsibility, integrity, vision, be part of a team and so much more!) to his studies in the film production/cinematography program at VFS.

My eternal thanks go to his fabulous music teachers in both middle and high school who didn't give up on him, but instead took him under their wings and helped him prosper.

Sincerely,

out there deserve the opportunity to explore and develop through band, choir, festivals, and the many possibilities that musical education offers. They deserve to find their own joy and healing.

Please do not take this away from our children.

Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,
Sheila Gabel
Chair, Esquimalt Music Parents Association

From: Sheila Gabel
To: Trustees
Subject: Tuesday"s Board Meeting Agenda
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:20:03 PM

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I would like to request that the following letter be included in Tuesday's agenda package re: Proposed cuts to district music programs.

Thank you.

Greetings,

I am writing as a parent to express my shock and dismay at hearing that Middle School music programs are on the chopping block. Gutting our music programs will be devastating to our children. I cannot imagine what my son's life would be like right now without the richness of his musical education.

As I write to you, I imagine that you do not wish to cut any program but feel forced to do so by budget pressures. It can't be an easy position to find yourselves in. As you make your decisions I ask that you deeply consider the human impact of destroying funding for music. Those of us who believe that music education must exist in our schools will never stop fighting for this right. We notice, and we care.

My son was fortunate to have begun learning about music from the very beginning of his school life. Our entire family has walked beside him as he learned the recorder, the ukulele, the saxophone, and the piano. We have watched him find his life passion, build confidence, create friendships, and develop discipline and creativity. Through his time at Shoreline Middle School his success in music gave him a foundation for taking risks. He participated in the Esquimalt Township Music Mentorship Program, which was made possible by his experiences in band and the support of his music teacher at Shoreline. He composed a song that was played by the school band at the *Music in the Air, Music Everywhere* Music Festival in 2018. I cannot describe how important that experience was in helping him to feel like he had a contribution to make to his community.

In high school now, my son has developed a very serious interest in music as a career. He is an A student who wants to combine his love of music composition with computers in some way. Music has given him a focus and a voice while he has struggled to find his way socially. I truly cannot imagine what his life would be like right now if he did not have music in his life. Our family would be so much poorer; more than that, we would not have the light in our house that comes from his joy.

One of the greatest delights in my life is to sit with my eyes closed while he improvises on his keyboard. I feel the music resonate right through me and fill my heart. Other young students

Shauna White

April 10, 2021

School Board Trustees
Greater Victoria School District Board of Education
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I recently learned that the Board of Trustees is considering cutting funding to music programming in excess of $1,000,000. Even worse, these proposed cuts include the elimination of funding for program administration of the Island Ukuleles program.

My son has been involved with the Island Ukuleles program for nine years from the time he started with the Little Ukers part of program at five years old, and my other two children were involved for a number of years as well. There are so many benefits of the Island Ukuleles program and it would be terrible to see it eliminated from the music education options offered in SD61. It is such a unique program with an incredible history and Tina Horwood has built it into more than just a ukulele program. It is a place where students learn music, build community across schools in the District, learn important life skills, gain self-confidence, and have fun together in a 'family' type of environment. I have never seen another program like it and I am so grateful that my children have been able to be a part of it.

The overall music education program in the Victoria School District has been built on many years and decades of dedicated teachers and musicians (including my great grandfather, F.T.C. Wickett, who was involved in developing music curricula) creating a solid music experience for thousands of children and youth over the years. Music has always been a huge part of my life and I feel that I was very fortunate to have had consistent exposure to music all through my public school years. As well, all three of my children have had the opportunity of learning from many skilled music teachers through their years in public school to date. They gained an ability to read music, they learned how to play different instruments, and they experienced performing in front of audiences. These skills are invaluable!

It would be such a shame to see music programs cut so drastically in Victoria schools as music provides an important balance in a well-rounded education along with academics, other fine arts, athletics, and social-emotional learning. I believe that without options like music, students miss out on the opportunity to have their learning enriched in ways that cannot come from classroom learning alone.

I urge you to reconsider the cuts you are proposing to Victoria's music programs. I especially hope that you will reconsider keeping Island Ukuleles intact. There are great benefits for our community when kids have music in their repertoire of skills and abilities, and when we invest in providing variety in students' learning, their experiences can provide positive impacts that last a lifetime helping them to make even greater contributions to society in general. For some students, school is the only place where they will ever experience music training. The implications of this proposed loss should not be overlooked.

Thank you for your consideration of my letter.

Sincerely,

Shauna White

Have you experienced the joy of thousands of students joining in song at the Victoria Sings festivals? A gym packed with student string players at the year-end gala? Are these the types of experiences you wish to eliminate for students?

I've heard that the elementary strings program was being considered for cuts earlier this year as an equity issue - some schools offered it while others didn't. The correct solution must be as obvious to you as it is to me - offer the same excellent learning opportunities to every student by running strings programs at all elementary schools, rather than cutting the excellent existing programs.

Surely Music shouldn't be the only curricular area targeted for cuts to address a district-wide budget shortfall. Please look for ways to maintain and support music education in our schools, and save money elsewhere.

Also, I'd like to express shock that the secretary-treasurer chose to use the culturally-insensitive phrase "sacred cows" on page 33 of the April 13 Special Board Meeting agenda package to describe one or more aspects of the district's budget. I hope you join me in condemning this unfortunate choice in words.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your efforts to save music in Victoria schools.

Sean Lampard-Quicke
Saanich, BC

From: Sean Lampard-Quicke
To: Trustees
Subject: Please do not cut music education in schools
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:50:08 AM

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Dear Trustees,

I write to you as a Saanich resident, and as a former SD61 TTOC now employed by another board. And I request that this letter be included in the upcoming board meeting agenda package.

Please do not allow the proposed decimation of middle and elementary music programs to go ahead. It would be a move in the wrong direction, with negative impacts on students at all levels of the school system for years and years to come.

I moved to Victoria as a student, planning to return to Vancouver after my studies in music education at UVic, but stayed because I found this city has some of the best music education programs and educators in the province. I wanted to live and work here because I saw vibrant, well-supported, and exemplary programs in nearly every middle and secondary school in the district. The teachers here were and are leaders in the music education community, serving on the boards of our provincial and national music teacher associations.
I completed my practicum at Mt. Doug and was hired to the TTOC list while completing that training. My first 4 days as a TTOC were in middle school music rooms in this district and I was lucky to be working with students in such great programs.

It's unconscionable that this province-leading district is considering eliminating such a strong program that has impacted tens of thousands of students over many years.

You know that reducing educational opportunities in middle schools will decimate secondary music programs in a few years, making it easier to cut those next. You can expect some extremely qualified teachers will start looking to move to other districts when they get the message that this district is no longer supportive. This brain drain would be a loss for the district and its students.

Participating in concert band and jazz band ensembles can be a life changing experience. Learning band instruments takes patience and time - often one year is just enough for students to get a handle on the instrument and begin to see its potential. The number of students carrying on with their instrument into secondary school will decrease if they only start learning in gr. 8 instead of gr. 6.
Do you enjoy seeing marching bands from Spectrum, Reynolds, and Oak Bay representing the district in the Victoria Day Parade? Expect those bands to shrink. Do you appreciate Vic High's R&B band representing the district at public events in town and elsewhere? Expect its quality to diminish!

Respectfully,
Scott Fox

From: Scott Fox
To: Ann Whiteaker; Rob Paynter; Ryan Painter; Elaine Leonard; Angie Hentze; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Diane Mcnally; Jordan Watters; Trustees
Subject: Re: Opposed to proposed cuts to music and inclusive education
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:22:36 PM

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Hello,

I forgot to add a request for my letter below to please be added to the board meeting agenda package.

Thank you,
Scott Fox

On Apr. 11, 2021 9:54 p.m., wrote:

To the School Board of Trustees of School District 61,

My name is Scott Fox and I am a parent of students attending schools within SD61. I am writing regarding an upcoming vote regarding possible cuts to funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

Please accept my letter as being opposed to proposed cuts to music and inclusive education. I encourage you to please join me in this regard.

I offer some of the causes for the shortfall lie in repeated poor decisions made by SD61 executives, and sadly supported by some Trustees.

In the last 4 years the district has:
- overspent many millions of dollars on the Burnside project in 2018 (largely because of a lack of governance and oversight)
- deemed land as being surplus in a aim to dispose to make up for financial shortfalls
- allowed the land to be sold or leased for millions of dollars less than their actual market value

All the while, executives' compensations increased by about 5% between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

SD61's executives' poor decisions have led to this predicament - and it is unfathomable how they can be suggesting student programs should have to pay for their historic (and likely ongoing) poor decision making.

My personal recommendation would be to start by cutting $ at the top of the organization - because the district doesn't have enough surplus land to sell to keep up with the incompetent financial decisions the current executives make.

From:	Sara Taccarelli
To:	Diane Mcnally; Jordan Watters; Trustees; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Deb Whitten
Subject:	Music program
Date:	Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:37:39 PM

Hello trustees, please include this email in the board meeting agenda package.

Hello, my name is Sara Taccarelli I am a grade seven student at Monterey middle school I play Cello and Bass in the strings program. The strings program has benifited me and other strings players by giving us a break from our normal day and giving us a chance to to expand our knowledge. We also enjoy being with our friends not from our class in a non covid year and getting to play an instrument is stress relieving as well as fun. Music means so much to so many people and we love and take pride in playing at performances, assembly's, other schools and on band/strings trips in a non covid year .Many other people me included would be very upset if we couldn't go on band/strings trips and perform once we can again. Please don't cancel music programs in schools, it means a lot to all of us who play instruments and our teachers. We all really hope you don't cancel music programs.

Sincerely, Sara and many others who don't want music cancelled

From: Sam Goldman
To: Trustees
Subject: Please Keep our Music Programs
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:56:18 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Trustees – Please include the music program in the Board meeting agenda package.
As a parent of a first year at Margaret Jenkins – it is important we find ways to keep (and later enhance) our music programs. There are numerous studies on the vital importance of music for young minds, besides all the socio, emotional, and joy of music.
As reference: https://www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/want-smarter-kids-teach-music-not-coding-according-to-mit.html
Thanks – and let us the parents and community know how to support this.
Sam

From: Sally Murphy
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to music programs
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:52:26 PM

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Please include this letter in the Board meeting agenda package.

As a retired music teacher from SD61, it is distressing to learn of massive proposed cuts to music programs in the district.

For the past 20 years, SD61 has been a leader in music education in BC. Thriving music programs in elementary, middle and high school have served thousands of students and enriched the school communities of which they are a part. One of the great things about SD61 music programs is that they are available to ALL students. No student is turned away due to lack of financial resources, disabilities or special needs.

The proposed cuts will have a devastating impact on students, who through music studies learn not only music skills but more importantly how to be part of a team, to express themselves creatively, and to be disciplined. Above all, music ensembles give our young people a sense of belonging and a release from mental/emotional stress - something that has been especially important during the pandemic. And of course, the evidence that music study increases academic performance continues to grow, putting to rest once and for all the notion that music is a "frill". In fact, the study of music contributes to greater academic success for students..

This has been a difficult year and there are still challenges ahead of us. Now more than ever we need to ensure that our young people have opportunities to experience beauty, joy, hope and a sense of belonging, all the attributes that are intrinsic to music study. Please do not cut these valuable music programs that do so much for our students.

Respectfully,

Sally Braswell Murphy

Cc:

Subject: Proposed cuts to middle school music programs in SD61 -addendum

Further to my e-mail, I forgot to add: ***please include this letter in the board meeting agenda package***

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to very strenuously protest the proposed cuts to middle school music programs for the 2021-2022 school year. My child, Kat, is in grade 7 at Cedar Hill Middle School and participates in band, choir and strings. Kat says that the music program is their favourite subject in school. Kat is not a child who enjoys rising early, but they do so happily three days a week because the music program at Cedar Hill is such an important part of their school life. Here are some things Kat has to say about the music program at Cedar Hill:

"I love my music teachers; they give us really interesting music to learn and know exactly what to say help us to perform better. They pick pieces that are just at our level and some with a bit of a challenge. I really like that because it is fun to try the challenging pieces. I also like being able to be with my friends and classmates and make big, beautiful, complicated noises together. Also, with every band class, we learn music history which is very interesting to me. I know school costs money but it isn't fair to cut the music program because it brings joy to a lot of people."

I am not sure I can add much to Kat's testimony except to say that, as a parent, I can see what a deep, deep love of music the program at Cedar Hill has given my child. I also find it interesting that Kat and the other students are so engaged with the program that they often end up helping each other out with music, peer-to-peer. To me that suggests that the teachers have achieved what every teacher dreams of - students so engaged that they are not merely attending and receiving what the teacher offers, but are taking ownership of their learning and helping one another to become better musicians.

My husband, Kevin, and I strenuously oppose the proposed cuts and ask respectfully that you search for other ways in which to address the budget deficit.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ruth Gillese

From: Jordan Watters
To: RUTH UNDERHILL
Cc: Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman
Subject: Re: Proposed cuts to middle school music programs in SD61 -addendum
Date: Monday, April 19, 2021 11:01:44 AM

Ms. Underhill,

I confirm your letter will be included in the upcoming agenda package as requested.

Jordan

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: RUTH UNDERHILL
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 7:28 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>

From: Nita McBurney <NMcBurney@sd61.bc.ca> on behalf of Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>
Sent: Friday, April 9, 2021 1:03 PM
To: allusers <allusers@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Letter from the Superintendent of Schools

Sent on behalf of Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools

As attached.

Kind regards,

Shelley Green
Superintendent of Schools & CEO
The Greater Victoria School District #61
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
V8Z 1E8
Phone: 250-475-4162 Fax: 250-475-4112

cid:image014.jpg@01D45C90.FD4C7780

For some students, music classes are the thing that keeps them coming to school. One Rockheights student (who happens to be autistic) calls our school "music school" and says band and strings are the only reason why he attends school at all. **What about students like him, who have band and strings instruction as a critical part of their IEP?** Another student is an incredibly gifted French horn player who is so terribly shy and anxious that she's nearly mute, but she SINGS FEARLESSLY through her horn. Two other students are brother and sister, both they, and their dad, share a one-bedroom apartment in Esquimalt. They are incredibly gifted and could pursue careers in music, but there is absolutely no way they could without the support of free instruments and instruction. In fact, almost no students at Rockheights can afford to rent instruments or pay for private music lessons, and yet they are at least as deserving of the opportunity as anyone else. Taking away the opportunity to be in band, strings and choir at the critical time of grade 6, is short-sighted and unfair to students who have invested so much of their time, money, hopes and dreams. I especially wonder about all the students who started band or strings this year, loved it, and can't take it next year?

Lastly, please consider that teachers, like myself, made major family and financial commitments based on having a "continuing contract" to teach music, our life's pursuit and passion. There is a basic unfairness about taking away most of our programs so suddenly.

Please reconsider the decision to cut thriving and highly successful music programs.

Warmly,

Risa McDonell
Music Teacher, Rockheights Middle School
Greater Victoria School District No. 61

From:	Risa Mcdonell
To:	Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell
Cc:	Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Cindy Romphf; Jeff Weaver; Mandart Chan; Trustees; Maryanne Trofimuk; Christina Pelletier
Subject:	Re: Letter from the Superintendent of Schools
Date:	Sunday, April 11, 2021 3:50:55 PM
Attachments:	image001.jpg

Dear Superintendent Green, Associate Superintendent Caldwell and Trustees:

I'm hoping that I can inspire you to reconsider the proposal to drastically cut music programs in School District 61. Please hear me out. I would like this letter to please be included in the upcoming School Board Meeting on Tuesday, April 13th at 6pm.

Rather than cutting programs, I'm sure the board has considered increasing its income. When North Vancouver was faced with the same challenges, as well as declining enrollment, they sold some of their property to build family-oriented housing, which they easily sold. It helped to bring enrollment back to the district and brought in income. Part of the project included building a gorgeous school board office in the heart of "downtown" North Vancouver, which is now a meeting place, a large venue for rent, a spectacular art gallery, offices and more. As you know, our current school board office is an outdated building which sits on sprawling prime real estate. It could be completely redeveloped into a beautiful community that includes residential and commercial spaces, park space and a connector to the Galloping Goose. A theatre in the space could be rented by all the schools to use for musical theatre productions, concerts, graduation events, conferences and outside organizations. It would be an amazing, positive contribution to our city and an incredible legacy of your team.

Victoria School District's music programs are highly respected Canada-wide for their exceptional quality and professionalism. Victoria's music educators are in positions of educational leadership in major institutions, such as the CMEA and the BCMEA. Our award-winning programs are widely recognized and celebrated. Decades of hard work, and investment of time, talent and expertise have built these programs - **a formidable legacy that can disappear all to easily if these programs are slashed**.

The benefits of music education, both musical and extra-musical, are well-documented. Here is a link to over 200 studies highlighting the benefits of music education. Starting an instrument in grade 6, at the latest, is what's needed to sustain these quality programs. **In middle school, grade 6 is when students are exploring their identity, finding their friends and figuring out what path their schooling is going to take for the next few years.** Music programs provide a safe, engaging, fun, and challenging place to do this important work of growing up. By grade 8, it's been my experience that they are very unlikely to start band or strings as a newcomer, and even less so as the years pass. I can't tell you how many people I've met who regret not learning an instrument when they were young, and how many others have told me that being in their school music program fundamentally shaped their school experience and ultimately their character. Members of the Victoria Symphony recently visited Rockheights to perform a free concert, we learned that all of them started their instruments in school band programs. Many more students don't become professional musicians, but credit their music programs for teaching them essential skills like perseverance, analytical skills and creativity. Nobel-prize winning scientist, Thomas Südhof credits his bassoon teacher with teaching him the skills to succeed as a scientist. All that aside, music is magical for its own sake.

From: Phyllis Webster
To: Trustees
Subject: RE: Music in the schools of SD 61
Date: Sunday, April 11, 2021 7:16:43 PM

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I am writing in support of continuing music programs in School District #61.

As a former educator, as a parent, grandparent, and person who loves music and music-making, I would like you to reconsider cancelling music programs in SD 61.

1. Not every child is lucky enough to have parents who can afford private music lessons so school music is very important.

2. Playing an instrument requires the discipline to practise regularly and to commit to reading music and producing a nice sound. The same is true of instrumental playing and singing in a choir. This discipline, patience, and perseverance spill over into other aspects of a child's life.

3. Working together as a team teaches the skills to work as a group, leadership skills (for the older grades), and provides the feeling of accomplishment after performing as a group.

4. Young people who play an instrument also learn good time management skills as they must make sure to plan practise times and to be prepared and on time for group rehearsals and performances.

5. As a result of all of these, there is the invaluable contribution towards mental health and feelings of being a valued member of a group (team).

6. There is a great deal of scholarly attention being paid to how playing an instrument helps with cognition and can help students with their academic learning particularly in mathematics and language acquisition.

And lastly, people who have school music programs learn to appreciate the music of professionals and often the other cultural arts which are so important to all of us in our society.

Please ensure that this e-mail is included in the package for all the trustees to read. I would be very happy to have a conversation with any of the trustees about this important topic.

Phyllis Webster

Paul Luchkow | Music

April 11, 2021

Dear Board of Trustees and Superintendents of School District 61,

It is with great concern that I learned about your consideration of drastic cuts to music programs in our schools.

I'm writing to you from several points of view: as a parent of a child who has been benefitting from the music program at Central Middle School for the past 2 years, a parent of a child who was looking forward to participating in strings at Sir James Douglas School next year, and also as a professional musician who has contributed to the creative life of Victoria for the last 15 years.

Kids need music in schools. Many people have shared this opinion and many studies have been conducted that compellingly support it. That being involved in music encourages collaboration, imagination, mutual support, acceptance of responsibility, building of sense of self, and growth of participation in community is not conjecture.

At this time in students lives when they are looking for where their sense of community might come from, and where the benefits of musical cooperation, negotiation, and problem solving can have dramatic positive influence in the rest of their learning, to consider such a reduction in music programs can't be happening with their best outcomes in mind.

If you've ever heard groups of young people practicing their instruments and working together to learn new music on their lunch breaks - if you've ever seen younger students look up to their older classmates with admiration, and in anticipation of what they get to play next, and then beam with pride as those older peers cheer them on in their own performance - if you've ever heard an adult state with regret that they wished they had a chance to learn an instrument when they were younger, you can't possibly contemplate such an alteration to music programs in schools.

Please reconsider your plan and find a way to continue supporting this vital program.

Very sincerely,

Paul Luchkow

Violinist and recording engineer

Ryan Painter - rpainter@sd61.bc.ca
Rob Paynter - rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca
Ann Whiteaker - awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca
Superintendent of Schools: Shelley Green - sgreen@sd61.bc.ca
Deputy Superintendent of Schools: Deb Whitten - dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca
Associate Superintendent: Harold Caldwell - hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca
MLAs
Minister of Education - Honourable Jennifer Whiteside - EDUC.Minister@gov.bc.ca
My MLA (Victoria-Swan Lake) Rob Fleming - rob.fleming.mla@leg.bc.ca

To the Trustees who make decisions regarding the education of young minds, I want to say that supporting a complete education system IS to support the rigorous study of music education. If you do not fully realize this, I would ask that you would more fully educate yourselves in this matter.

The children of our society deserve this education and our society needs this quality of character in its citizens. History has proved such.

Below are two PDF's for you to read and I will trust that you will do this, and I would like to receive a note in response to say that you have done this.

Thank you,

Bambie Maree

The Victoria Suzuki Piano School

Mentor and student working in total cooperation and mutual communication, in an attitude of complete respect, and as equals.

"Since music has so much to do with the molding of character, it is necessary that we teach it to our children." Aristotle

To the Board of School District 62 of Victoria, B.C.
It is time to show how much our society really understands this quotation and cares about this outcome, and then to offer a complete and comprehensive education to our children where the arts are integral to their wellbeing.

If the study of the arts has historic merit in the education of young minds, it should not be questioned in the future plans and aims for the students of today. Take note of successful people throughout history and in all fields, who have had the mainstay of music in their education and take note of every family event and international world setting where music is required. This is an essential cost of an essential human expression. Take note that Einstein claimed that his theory came to him as he played his violin. Take note of the humming of a happy two-year-old. Take note of the medical research regarding the healing that happens when music is made and shared anywhere, and at any time and particularly in illness. There is so much scientific fact to back this up, you would have to be living under a rock and completely illiterate not to know about the benefits to the formation of young minds and hearts as they develop, and the need for music which helps them to learn well in every other subject. Please do not model a myopic and short-sided approach to educating our young people, for they will not thank you as they enter the schools of today and then into the leadership in their future.

Children understand the value of the arts intuitively, and they constantly work to blossom and then to bloom in a healthy, balanced environment of communication and higher learning through the arts. It is absurd to have to debate the merit of music in their education.

Ask yourselves how many times already impoverished musicians across the world who during a pandemic, and after loosing their entire opportunity for income after a lifetime of rigorous higher learning, have offered their talent to freely play and soothe the hearts and minds of their suffering people. Would you give that much? Do you have the heart to selflessly serve like that?

Fully qualified adults who have spent their entire lives to honing their expertise are required in order to demonstrate and set the highest possible standard, to model, inspire, teach, mentor, and foster this for our children. It should be the basic goal that this is THE standard and then, watch the students overshoot that goal. Show that you care about them and about this literate society. The children are watching, teach the children well. This is what they want. This is what they deserve. This is rigorous education. This is not a frill, and if that is your opinion, then, I would ask that you would fully educate yourselves.

"Where there is great love, much can be accomplished." "We are not educating these children to become professional musicians, but to be decent and fine human beings."
Shinichi Suzuki – world music educator

Bambie Maree
The Victoria Suzuki Piano School

Music is: *Big* Ideas

M A T H
LANGUAGE
HISTORY
Awareness of the Human Family's Civilizational Consciousness
A complete Social, Ethnic Experience
INTENTIONAL THOUGHT

Meditative repose

Cooperative team structures - Personal discipline
Systematic goal study - Delayed gratification
Detailed listening, Respectful participation, Ordered behaviour
Liquid Architecture - Expression of Line & Landscape

Movement

Agility, Balance - Kinesthetic coordination
READING - RIGOROUS STUDY- RESEARCH

Compositional Foundations *Creative Writing* Poetry

SCIENCE – PHYSICS
4 DIMENSIONAL - Length – breadth - height – existing in time
Sonic biology

Expression of the heart – *Food* of the soul-

Intimate Dialoque
Hopes ~ PASSION ~ Dreams
The human communication with Something Beautiful that is beyond ourselves.

And still, we find that we have to explain that this should be part of our educational system?
Bambie Maree Victoria Suzuki Piano School

From: Barbara Eadie
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Deb Whitten
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:00:57 AM

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Please make this part of the presentation to the School Board.

Dear Superintendent Green, Deputy Superintendent Whitten, Associate Superintendent Caldwell and Trustees Sd 61,

For the last 15 or so years of my 30+ year teaching career I was the strings teacher at 8 elementary schools. The enthusiasm for this program exceeded all my expectations. Parents of young children would stop me in the hall as tell me how much their son or daughter was looking forward to joining strings when they got to grade 5. This program should be saved and expanded to include all elementary schools so that every child has an opportunity to join no matter what school they attend. Students get far more than music from programs like this. They learn personal responsibility, team work, perseverance, patience, cooperation, organization, and many other life skills. When students are seeking their first job later on in high school these traits are what prospective employers look for. Colleges and universities have done studies on student success at their institutions and have found that students who have participated in the arts during their pre-university years have a better chance of successfully completing their degree. Other studies have shown that the average GPA (grade point average) among students in arts programs is higher than the average GPA across the entire school population. Music makes students smarter! These programs should not be cut.

Sincerely,

Barbara Eadie

Private Flute Teacher
Retired Instrumental Music Teacher SD 61
BMus Hope College, Holland Michigan
MMus Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York
Kodaly Certificate U Victoria
Suzuki Flute Teacher Certification Books 1-4

From: bettybob@shaw.ca
To: Trustees
Subject: school band
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:07:47 PM

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To the Superintendent of School District 61 and all trustees of the district,
I am saddened to hear of a proposed cut to the music programs and consequently to the teaching staff throughout school district 61.
Having had 4 grand children go through the program I have seen it as not only building community, commitment, belonging, and creating as if that wasn't enough
it is also giving each of those children a universal second language with which to communicate to anyone in the world, an understanding of order and turn,
and a commitment to something other than and larger than themselves to share.
The ability to read music is linked to the comprehension of language and mathematics.
Sad, sad short term thinking.
I marvel at the magic music teachers are able to create for their students and are some of the most dedicated of teachers with their time and their energy.
Thank you
I would like to have this letter included in the correspondence of the next board meeting.
Betty Molnar

From: Bob and Susan White
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting. Regarding Music Program Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:57:23 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 Trustees and Superintendent,

It has come to our attention that School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to elementary and middle school music programs. Why tear apart one of the most successful and exciting music programs in the country? The very people your cuts target are the ones who have courageously kept music alive in the hearts of children throughout the most trying of covid lockdown times. As retired teachers we moved from out of province to Victoria where we've made our home very near to Campus View elementary school. When we experienced our first Campus View music production open to the public we were absolutely amazed at the spirit, skill level and tremendously high rate of student participation that the music teaching department was able to organize. Our friends have a granddaughter attending Campus View School so we have had a number of invitations and opportunities to witness great musical performances orchestrated by Mrs Onuma, a brilliant music teacher and community leader. If anything, the music department ought to be rewarded for their work over and above the demands of their paid service. Mrs Onuma encourages her students to join community music programs, choirs, music camps and has the children bring their instruments into the school where she will enable them to showcase their skills. Campus View has had national music program awards; they were awarded and recognized as an accompanying choir for the last winter olympics; the whole school participated in a musical staged at UVic's Farquar Auditorium promoting environmental stewardship of the Salish Sea. The scope of their musical energy and effort is breathtaking. What's to be gained by dashing this remarkable and dedicated team of professionals?

Please vote NO to these cuts to the music program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bob and Susan White

From: Bobbi Bartle-Clar
To: Harold Caldwell; Shelley Green; Trustees
Subject: Regarding the proposed cuts to elementary and middle school music
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:34:22 PM

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Please include my remarks in the Board meeting agenda package.

Dear Ms Green, Mr Caldwell, and Trustees of School District #61,

The proposed cuts to elementary and middle school music have struck fear and dread into my heart and the hearts of my 4 kids, who are all involved in music in SD61. Music has been a lifeline for all of them to one extent or another.

I could talk about my daughter in Grade 11, who had no discernible social circle in middle school, but found success and a safe place to be in the band and choir rooms. Music gave her a sense of purpose, a sense of accomplishment, and is her chosen career path, as she intends to pursue music education upon her graduation next year.

Or, I could talk about my son in Grade 9, who suffers from school-related anxiety, especially Sunday nights before the school week is about to start. Just the other week, he was talking about how he was feeling anxious about the new week, but then he remembered he had choir the next day, so "it would be a good day." Starting high school during a pandemic, especially when his friend group is scattered amongst several high schools, was a nerve wracking proposition for him, but the band and choir rooms have provided a safe space and a source of new friends, which I am grateful for.

Or maybe I could talk about my daughter in Grade 7, who found confidence in Grade 5 when she started Strings in elementary school. Viola was interesting and provided an enjoyable challenge, and she found that she was good at it. Grade 6 provided many new music opportunities, so much so so that she has eschewed any sports possibilities so she can keep her time open for more music.

Or my son in Grade 5, who joined Strings in September because his friends did, but has enjoyed it so much that he asked to take private lessons (which he is). I know there are many children who would like that opportunity, but the budget won't stretch that far.

Or I could talk about myself, growing up up-Island in a district with a well-established music program, where our high school choir was regularly invited to national festivals, and I was fortunate to attend one. And I had the opportunity to play in the Provincial Honour Orchestra in Grade 12 at the BCMEA Conference. Not long after I graduated from high school, the Strings program was cut from my district. Several years after that, junior highs and middle schools were eliminated and band was moved from a start of Grade 6 to a start of Grade 8. My nieces and nephews attended my alma mater, and the music program there is a shadow of what it once was. I know the band teacher at the school, and she will tell you it's tough to get kids

to start something new in Grade 8, especially something with such a steep learning curve as playing an instrument.

I am now a music teacher with the program Music Together, and I am fortunate to see how music transforms the lives of families. Parents regularly tell me that they didn't know "music could be this fun" or that they didn't know they could sing, because they didn't have a music program growing up. One of our tenets in Music Together is that music is our birthright, and that every person has the right to be able to participate in the music of their culture. "Participate" is the important word there - there is a lot of music consumption happening in our culture, but less and less music participation. Just ask a typical adult the last song they sang with a group of adults...the answer will probably be "Happy Birthday".

Given the reams and reams of research on how music benefits our lives in multiple ways, and given the extremely stressful time we are still living through, music is a survival strategy for many. So why would School District 61 choose to cut the heart out of Elementary Strings and middle school music, given all the harm that could do to so many of our children?

Sincerely,

Bobbi Bartle-Clar

From: Noelle Davis
To: Trustees
Subject: SD61 Proposed Budget Concerns
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:40:43 AM

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To School District 61 Board of Trustees,
We are the Parents' Advisory Committee for Braefoot Elementary School in Victoria, BC. We are writing to you about the upcoming vote and our concerns regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.
During inarguably the hardest school year in quite some time, proposing major cuts to our budget, and removing music program funding from virtually all of our school district's middle schools is unconscionable. According to the proposed budget slide on page 26, the SD61 School Board is removing 11.35 FTE music teachers, leaving 2.423 FTE.
For so many children, music strongly connects them to their school community. It's a highlight of their day and is so important to children's development. There's a proven and intrinsic link between music and math and reading achievement.
Music has such a huge impact on students' social and emotional state, as well as on their overall development. It has a profoundly positive impact on school and community culture. For most parents, concerts are the only time they're able to see their children interact in the school environment. There has been a great deal of research done on the impact of music on children's school achievement. At the end of this document, we have cited two of these studies.
A huge lasting concern from the pandemic is the mental health strain it is having on the kids. Nobody does math when they're sad or anxious. The arts fill that space. And it's not just about the learning of music as a skill- there's a camaraderie there that gives so many kids a place where they belong and feel safe and included. Music is one of the ways we can psychologically support children at school. Music is also a healthy form of expression for children and a real source of pride and joy for many.
The music teachers in our district are some of the most inspiring and passionate teachers (and people) we have ever met. By depriving the kids of these teachers and the musical experience they provide, we rob the children of a special connection that is so needed during these difficult times. When we cut these music teachers, we are cutting not just the music programs, but all the other enrichment these teachers bring to the lives of our children. As one of many examples we could share, a music teacher at Cedar Hill Middle School, Mrs. Cindy Romphf, is doing live Zoom baking classes every weekend, that are open to all Cedar Hill students. These 2-3 hour sessions are very well attended by children from all cohorts. They are such a solace for the kids during these times of isolation and create a strong sense of unity.
We don't know what the world will look like next school year and with all the Covid variants, there's a good chance the world will not have returned back to normal. If the kids are still restricted from their regular lives, middle school music programs are one of the only extracurricular activities these students will have access to.

Looking toward the post pandemic future, public school music programs provide the chance for some kids to be exposed to music who otherwise may never have the opportunity. Our public schools are supposed to fill a mandate of equitable learning, and it should not be the case that only those who can afford it can access the world of music.

This sweeping decision should not be made lightly as it will have repercussions for many years to come. It is irresponsible to cut these programs without more investigation and consultation with the community. We need to understand the broad impact of removing access to music programs for middle schools before even considering this.

We strongly believe that we should not be making major cuts to our public schools at this time, and we should not be removing music from the middle schools in School District 61. Your own vision statement reads, "Each student within our world-class learning community has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations." We believe that a world class learning community would not close the door on an aspect of education that is so fundamental, inclusive, and is recognized as intrinsic to children's development as music.

Respectfully,

Braefoot Elementary School PAC

**

A 2016 study at the University of Southern California's Brain and Creativity Institute found that musical experiences in childhood can actually accelerate brain development, particularly in the areas of language acquisition and reading skills. According to the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation (NAMM Foundation), learning to play an instrument can improve mathematical learning and even increase SAT scores.

"Researchers, from the University of Vermont, have shown that musical training can lead to lower anxiety in children and help with emotional control, as well. Simply put, the research has shown that music can thicken the cortex, which is the decision making part of the brain. A thicker cortex allows for greater executive function and decision making, which can help children and teens formulate better decisions based on the data available to them. The development of the cortex happens more rapidly when children learn to play an instrument because they learn to better focus their attention, control their emotions and decrease childhood anxiety. The study examined brain scans of 236 children and noticed substantial differences. Along with a reduction in childhood anxiety, learning an instrument can also help make your child smarter and less likely to suffer from depression according to the study."

April 12, 2021

Dear SD61 Trustees,

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

I am writing to express my serious concern about the proposed cuts to your elementary and middle school music programs, including band, strings, choir, ukulele, and district fine arts programming such as the Victoria Symphony education concerts. These cuts would have a long-lasting negative impact on students in the public school system, and I sincerely ask you to reconsider.

As an SD61 alum who participated in the music program from kindergarten through grade twelve, **I can say with the utmost confidence that my education, and my life today are richer for it**. Through choir and band, I learned not only how to develop and grow skills in singing and playing an instrument, but also how to appreciate all genres of music beyond what is played on the radio. My social-emotional development was also supported through music programming. Band class in particular was where I met and connected with friends who continue to be my closest friends today, fifteen years after graduating.

Band and music class was one of the few places where students from all walks of life came together. Students should be able to access music education regardless of their socio-economic or family situation. **Access to music education and experiences should be universal, not exclusive to those who can pay privately**.

The middle school years are a crucial time in brain development and delaying the onset of classes like band, strings, and choir is a disservice to your students. **Research has shown that music education supports neurological development in areas including language, reasoning, problem solving, memory, and spatial intelligence, for example**.

Music is a form of self-expression. Cutting middle school music programs like band, strings, and choir means that you would be denying students opportunities to learn valuable life and mental wellness skills. **At time when everyone's mental health has been tested due to the pandemic, now more than ever we need to lean into education and subjects that supports the mental health of students. Music education is one of those that is a crucial mental wellness support for so many – starting in public school and lasting into adulthood**.

Music education is vital learning for students that must begin before the high school years. Please vote NO! to the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school music programs and help to maintain accessibility for all young people.

Sincerely,

Brenna Cowden

April 12, 2021

RE: 2021/22 SD Budget

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I am writing this letter in regards to the SD61 2021/22 annual budget. I have read over the proposed cuts to make up the 7 million dollar deficit and I am shocked that this district's first thought is to cut programs that actually have an impact on students. The school districts' own goal states that "the student experience is at the heart of all we do" and yet district administration grows and grows leaving little for the actual programs/resources our students genuinely need.

Cutting the music program is a mistake. It is a program that benefits the students and provides a unique experience and learning opportunity that other subjects do not. I have seen how both our children have both excelled in the Strings and Band programs offered at elementary and middle school level. Music instruction is unique as it provides a different kind of learning and provides a much needed creative outlet.

Over the years I have seen the number of positions at the district office grow. It appears that we have at least 12 District Principals/Vice Principals, 2 deputy superintendents, and a vast learning department. I would suggest that if cuts are going to happen, that they happen at the district level as I see very little evidence of how their work directly impacts students and their learning.

I hope that the district is able to re-evaluate it's priorities and make it's goal of having the student experience be at the heart of it's choices a reality.

Sincerely,

Brett Pretty and Nicole Stead

Parents/Educators with SD61

From:	Erin Finlayson
To:	Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Cc:	Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker
Subject:	Budget Meeting - A request from a grade 3 student
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 5:03:13 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Brynn Parsons and I am in grade 3 at Braefoot Elementary School. I am writing to tell you that the school music program needs to go on. What if someone who is really good at an instrument doesn't get to play and isn't motivated to do it. They get the chance to try and learn in school. A future musician would be canceled. No one would be able hear how good they are. With strings gone a violinist, cellist, and much more, would never be able to play! And not being able to do band until eighth grade, people wouldn't be motivated to finally do what they want! Music inspires people to do what they love! So think about how many people you're hurting by canceling the music program. I need you to think about that before you decide to get rid of the school music program due to budget cuts. You can make that money some other way, just not through cutting some peoples favorite subject, music.

Personally, I like music because you be creative, do what you want and try your best. If you don't like one type of music, there is a million other types to try! So, if you cancel band, strings and choir, people won't have many other options to resort to. Music is great. It gives people chances to express themselves not through their actions and words, but through an instrument or singing voice. It helps people show who they really are! Even if they're shy, or quiet, anyone can do it. Anyone can become a star. And if you don't let people sing or play their favorite instrument then they can't continue what they love. People whose kids don't do any musical things at school, don't know how much it means to people. And they will probably vote with getting rid of the music program. So, I'm telling you to ignore those people, and keep our music.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Thank you,

Brynn Parsons – future musician

From:	Campus View PAC
To:	Trustees; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Deb Whitten
Cc:	Angela Harvie
Subject:	Music in Schools
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 9:39:01 AM
Attachments:	Campus View Music Students.mov

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Dear School District 61 Trustees,

I'd like to request that you include our short video, made by our students, as well as my letter, at the next board meeting.

Music is such an important part of our children's lives, and it makes me so sad that you are considering removing it due to budgetary constraints. **You can do better - our children deserve it.**

Has music made an impact on you? Everyone I speak to has a wonderful story about our music program, and its positive influence on their lives. The stories shared with me include grandparents who delight in performances, past students who reminisce about band trips, parents who have jam sessions with their children, those with fewer means who have had the opportunity to learn instruments, a musician who played at Carnegie Hall, children who participated in CBC music challenges and more. **Please, let our children have these experiences.**

It is not just anecdotal that music is an important part of our educational path. There are many studies that demonstrate engaging in a music program is beneficial because it creates "stronger cognitive abilities, vocabulary, rhythm perception & production, which are linked to reading", mathematical abilities and more. (Link to one such study is below). Studies also show that introduction to musical programming at a young age is important. **Please, listen to the science..**

Music has been a huge part of district 61's history, and it is even listed on the district's website. "Over the years, school music programs have played a significant role in student learning while promoting musical competence across the District." Our children in elementary and middle school have won accolades from the CBC Music Challenge on many occasions, and many student have gone on to have careers in music. **Please, continue this successful program.**

I'm hoping that your inboxes have become overwhelmed with an appreciation for music. You have heard from students, parents, grandparents, taxpayers in the community, musicians, and more. We want this program to continue, If you watched our video, you know, our children want this program to continue. **Please, listen to the people, listen to our children, listen to the music!**

Thanks so much,
Karen Wilson
Campus View Elementary PAC President

(See Frontiers | Engagement in community music classes sparks neuroplasticity and language development in children from disadvantaged backgrounds | Psychology (frontiersin.org))

From: Capriccio
To: Trustees
Subject: Do NOT Cut MUSIC Budgets
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:43:22 PM

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Dear Trustees of SD61

Please do not cut any money from the schools Music programs. Perhaps, for once, try cutting the budget for SPORTS!

Music education is one of the most important topics for children of all ages. The love of music of all kinds remains with people as they grow old and continues to be one of the components of a happy life. Music can sooth the soul, lift the spirits, and make people laugh, sing, dance, smile. In order to become proficient on any instrument, children must encounter and learn to play at a very young age, and be able to continue their studies all through school.

I know your time is precious, so I won't continue to stress the great benefits derived from keeping music as a vital part of every person's education. Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting and urge your members to keep and increase the budgets for music education in all areas.

Yours truly,

P. McKenzie

From: Victoria Symphony
Sent: April 12, 2021 12:48 PM
To:
Subject: Urgent advocacy needed in support of maintaining music programs inelementary and middle school programs!

Help keep music available to children in schools.
Please make your voice heard before Tuesday!

Dear Friends of Music,

To help address a 7-million-dollar deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. They propose cutting the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives, including cuts to a long-term and valuable partnership with the Victoria Symphony (our Education concerts that reach over 10K students per year).

The proposed cuts will have a lasting effect on arts and culture in Victoria, and as lovers of music, we wanted to let you know so that you could make your voices heard. See **page 26 of the attached Draft Budget** with staff recommendations for the list of proposed cuts. As we all know, making music together is a way for kids to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

If you write an email to trustees@sd61.bc.ca it will go to all trustees and the Superintendent. If you also want it included in the correspondence section of the next Board meeting agenda package you need to state this (I.e. **please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.)**

If you would like to present at the School Board meeting on April 13 at 6pm TOMORROW NIGHT, please contact Vicki Hanley at vhanley@sd61.bc.ca / 250.475.4106

You can also fill out this survey (by 4pm Mon Apr 12) to tell the school district that music education is important: **https://my.thoughtexchange.com/#346444921/hub**

You can read the Victoria Symphony's letter to the trustees **here**.

Best wishes,
Matthew White
CEO of the Victoria Symphony

Victoria Symphony | victoriasymphony.ca

Victoria Symphony | 620 View Street, Suite 610, Victoria, BC V8W 1J6 Canada

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From: Carli-Ann E-G
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Please do not cut the music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:53:33 AM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Carli-Ann Engelman Germain, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Carli-Ann Engelman Germain

From: Carol Pesce
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Deb Whitten
Subject: READING RECOVERY PROGRAM BUDGET CUTS
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:17:43 PM

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To School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Carol Pesce, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Reading Recovery in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Reading Recovery in schools cannot be disputed. Reading Recovery is crucial for the Early Literacy Intervention of our most vulnerable learners. While small group literacy instruction is good, it does not even begin to come close to the level of individualized support that the Reading Recovery intervention does. Reading Recovery offers 1-to-1 for 20 weeks of intervention and it's made a world of difference in preventing big gaps in literacy learning in countless children. If we move to a new model, those gaps will increase and it will be more difficult to accelerate student progress as quickly or build the strong relationships/safe space required to help kids feel safe to take learning risks.

My experience with Reading Recovery has been amazing, it has made a big difference for my son in grade 3.
My child benefited from Reading Recovery immensely, he has ADHD with Tourette and he started the school year unable to read
but thank you to the Reading Recovery program he finished the grade 3 school year above reading level and now that he is in grade 9 he is an avid book reader.
I also have two other kids that both have benefitted from reading recovery and again they are successful and great reader because of it.

Cutting this intervention in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully, Carol Pesce

From: Carol-Anne Thacker
To: Trustees
Subject: Re: Upcoming Budget Discussions and the Middle School Music Program: For inclusion in April 13, 2021 Board Meeting Agenda
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:15:05 AM

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Good Morning.

I would like my communication included in the agenda for the April 13th SD61 board meeting, please and with thanks.

I am writing to provide input into your budget review process for SD61 and proposals to engage in cuts to music and arts programs at the middle school level.

My son attends Shoreline Middle School and is in his second year of the band program there.

The music program at this school is amazing. It is inclusive and accessible to every student that wants to participate and is a great source of shared pride across the student and staff population, as well as in the surrounding community. I would hazard to guess that nearly half of the students in the entire school participate - These are kids from all backgrounds and demographics that attend the school and for some it is the only exposure to art and music that they may get.

Music - and the arts more broadly - are a critical part of education. Music enhances cognitive abilities, has positive impacts on memory and learning abilities. Arts are not an area where you should be cutting back at any level.

Specifically related to Shoreline, the music program is the soul of the school. You would know this if you've attended any of the packed concerts, or witnessed the audiences in the hundreds that have attended the Zoom concerts they have put on this year.

Please don't cut music - You would be doing the institution and its students a huge disservice to reduce it in any way.

Thank you for letting me share my feedback into this matter.

With kind regards.

Carol-Anne Thacker

From: Cathy Miller
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence at Board Meeting Tuesday April 13
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:30:12 PM

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Dear Trustees:
I am writing to urge you to vote No to the proposed cuts in elementary and middle school music programs.

I know that music education seems an easy cut to people who don't know its full value. It seems frivolous and unnecessary in these times, especially when there is danger in coming together to make music during a pandemic.

But this is when we need it the most.

Being a kid is all about fitting in, finding friends and acceptance, and finding something you can love. The more we expose children to different subjects, the more broad-minded adults we will be creating. Like sports, music requires everyone to work together to create something bigger than themselves. I can't tell you how important it is to be part of a team when you're 12 years old!

Can you teach self-assurance? Not without having to get up and perform in front of people - and survive! After that, you can do anything!.

I found my "tribe" when I was 15 years old at high school back in London Ontario. After elementary school choirs, I found folk music in high school and never looked back. Music was what I hung my self-assurance on, and it has given me a wonderful 40 year career as a performer, teacher, writer, recording and international touring artist and mentor. I realized very early that music was something I could learn for the rest of my life, and likely never master it. This is a path worth taking - doing something that will teach you new things for your entire life.

Not every kid is a sports star. Not every kid is crazy about computers. And not every kid will grow up to be a professional musician. But for the students who are exposed to music training, in choirs and ukulele groups and string ensembles, they will reap the benefits of that instruction for the rest of their lives. Poise, sensitivity, accomplishment, teamwork, physical coordination, discipline, a sense of belonging and a lifelong appreciation of music.

Please don't take that away from them. It's vital to prepare them for full and useful lives.

Thank you,
Cathy Miller, Victoria

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From: C P
To: Trustees
Subject: E-mail letter for Tuesday, April 13th Board Meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:00:29 PM

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Good evening,

As a beneficiary of a public school music program (music exposure/education in my elementary and middle school years included Ukulele, Guitar, Jazz Band, Choir, Musical Theatre) and now a parent, I am distressed to learn about the proposed cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs in SD 61.

Music programs benefit every child (the research in this regard cannot be refuted), but for many children this early exposure leads to a love of and involvement in music that helps see them through the difficult high school years. Children of all abilities and interests need the opportunity to develop and explore all education opportunities (whether they be academic, sport, or **music)**, and each child needs the same opportunity to be seen, explore, belong, and to thrive. For many children, during their school years, this opportunity comes only through music.

We should be far past the point of seeing music programming as "extra."

Please vote NO to the proposed cuts.

- Chanda Pacholuk

From: Charlotte McCrae
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence to be included at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:33:20 PM
Importance: High

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To SD61 Superintendent and Trustees,

I understand that in an effort to balance the budget, the board is preparing to vote on a proposal to cut elementary and middle school music programs. I'm writing to urge you to vote NO and help maintain accessibility to these programs for young people in the school district.

I don't have kids myself, but a good friend of mine was a high-school music teacher in Victoria for 25 years and another friend is currently a counsellor in the school system. I'm always amazed at the enthusiasm, creativity and talent displayed by students during their school concerts. What I've heard from my friends is that involvement in their school's music program is a powerful part of kids' academic, creative, emotional, and social development. For some kids, involvement in the music program is the highlight of their school experience and their saving grace, if a difficult home life or other issues threaten their scholastic success.

In addition, this seems like the worst time to take away music programs from kids who are already stressed as a result of the COVID pandemic. Removing music programs would only add to their anxiety and worsen their educational experience in an already challenging school year.

The transferable life skills that music education develops in kids contribute to their ability to become creative thinkers and leaders we need in every profession. It would be a serious mistake to deny SD61 students an opportunity that could significantly impact their futures.

"The student experience is at the heart of all we do in SD61". If you believe in this statement, please, vote NO to proposed cuts in SD61 music programs.

Sincerely,
Charlotte McCrae
Concerned citizen

From: Charmaine Tai
To: Shelley Green; Trustees; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: SD61 Budget Proposal for Middle School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:52:54 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Charmaine Tai, and I am a community member in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I strongly believe that the proposed funding reductions for Middle Band, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, and related fine arts will have a negative impact with devastating effects on the Greater Victoria community that will be felt not only immediately but for years to come.

Music programs provide an extremely valuable space for building community. Every school concert is an opportunity for students and their teachers to show their growth and progress and share with every friend and family member that shows up to listen. It is a very tangible way of saying "look, we made this together". Every field trip, whether it's to listen to the symphony or perform as a school band, is an opportunity to expand a student's world beyond their classrooms and home, eye-opening opportunities they might not have otherwise had.

As a former music student at the University of Victoria, I had many classmates major in music education. Several of them were local, former students from SD61 who were inspired by their experiences in district music programs and now learning how to teach music so they could continue to share their joy in music with others. They went on to practicums in SD61, mentored by fantastic teachers who are now their colleagues. Their training and first experiences as educators would not be at the high quality that it is now if these robust middle school music programs and their teachers did not exist.

I ask that you take the time to consider the ripple effects that are likely to occur should middle school music programs be reduced and/or cut. Without music programs at the middle school level, secondary school music programs will see less engagement and will eventually be considered for reductions when the next budget shortfall arises, resulting in a dearth of music programs beyond elementary school. Consider the future difficulties of

restoring these music programs someday if you choose to cut them now. Consider the inequalities of opportunities that will arise if these programs are cut and only the wealthy families are the ones with the means to give their kids musical education, reinforcing a false belief that fine arts are only for the elite and wealthy.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students and the community of Greater Victoria in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,
Charmaine Tai

April 12, 2021

From: Christina Haska
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:08:01 PM

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Dear Trustees,

I am writing regarding the proposed budget which would significantly reduce funding for music programs in SD 61.

As someone who is not a parent, or a student, or someone specifically involved with the music industry, it may seem strange to voice my significant concerns with these budget cuts.

However, I am a proud community member and someone who benefited tremendously from the music program in my public schooling experience as a child and teenager.

I believe in the value of a holistic, well- rounded education and in creating diverse learning opportunities for students. The benefits of musical education are varied and have been studied at length, and have a positive influence not just for musical value, but in a wide range of subjects.

Beyond the measurable value of access to musical education, there is something ineffable that many people who have had the experience of participating in group music may attest to. Music classes teach students the value of teamwork, the value of working hard not just when you have a chance to shine, but all together as a chorus, music class teaches students that everyone comes with different backgrounds, and these differences contribute to a larger, beautiful whole. I think these are important lessons that are incredibly valuable.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Respectfully,

- Christina

From: Christine St. Peter
To: Trustees
Subject: cutting music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:38:26 PM

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Please reconsider this. Music is so important for children's well-being. We all know that the wealthy can afford private lessons; it is the less affluent that profit so much from public school programs. It is a life-saver, to say nothing of life enhancer.

Please include my letter with the file that goes to the meeting.

Yours,

Dr. Christine St. Peter
Professor Emerita
University of Victoria

From: Christopher Sibbald
To: Trustees
Subject: Funding for Music Education
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:44:32 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting

Dear SD61 Trustees

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Sincerely,

Christopher Sibbald

From: Coral Lemay
To: Trustees
Subject: Board Meeting April 13
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:56:08 PM

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Hello, I would like the following statements to be read during your board meeting tomorrow. I have also linked a petition to the bottom of this email.

On Sunday, I started a petition to show our community strength, and passion for music. Countless have reached out to me talking about their experiences with music programs within their schools. All of them have something in common; music saved their life.

The grim reality is that without music programs, academic performance within schools will crumble, depression and suicide rates will skyrocket.

The fact that this is even being considered is absolutely disgusting.
We are talking about students futures. School is the stepping stone for futures that will soon be cracked.
You are putting money, over mental health. These students have lost their childhoods this past year, and your considerations are ripping away any possibility of them getting it back.

Some of these students have been immensely grieving family members, friends and neighbours, finding themselves in a pit, where their only ladder to get out is in their love for music.

I am a student, I am a child, I am a musician, I am a life.

Coral Lemay

Petition:
http://chng.it/mhjkgWTm

From: Cornelia Braune
To: Trustees
Subject: No !
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:27:30 PM

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email letter in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13

I vote NO! to the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school programs and I vote for help to maintain accessibility for all young people.

Sent from my iPhone

From:
To: Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Trustees
Subject: Proposed Music Cuts: Just Don"t!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:17:33 PM

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The middle school music program at Lansdowne was the best program that my kids ever took part in. The learning they got there was more important than anything else at school, except for being taught to read.

There is such an emphasis on group work and job preparation in the new curriculum. And music provides better preparation in this regard than any academic subject. The students have to learn to work together on complex tasks, often starting from scratch. They have real deadlines and they know whether they did well or not. The marks aren't subjective – the audience and the students themselves know whether they did a good job. It is stressful but rewarding. Teachers of academic subjects try to have the kids learn from group work, but the experiences are forced and artificial and, in my experience, are often more trouble than they are worth. Putting on a concert or theatre production is complex work that takes months to pull together. Music students get an experience of cooperating on a complicated task that many adults never get; real world jobs are often a lot simpler than middle school musical productions. My two children will be going on to university and professional careers; they are better prepared because of the music programs that they have been in.

It drives me crazy that music education is put on the chopping block so casually and so often.

It also drives me crazy that a school board that keeps talking about equity and inclusion would even consider cutting music. I've spent well over $20,000 on piano lessons for two children, because my wife and I are both well-paid professionals. Meanwhile, the school provided free education to my children, who learned singing, bass, bassoon, flute, and percussion. How would low-income families ever be able to pay for music education if it is cut from the school? Frankly, I'd rather see my taxes increased.

Please don't cut these programs.

Dan Del Villano

P.S. Please include this email in the upcoming board meeting agenda package.

From:
To: Trustees
Cc: Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker
Subject: Email correspondence included in Budget Board meeting Tuesday April 13
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:25:14 PM

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Hello School District 61 Trustees,

I am sending this email to express my concern over the proposed budget cuts surrounding education assistant support (really any special needs funding cuts!), reading recovery programs, and the music programs.

As a professional, I am a behavior consultant serving individuals with disabilities. I have noticed a high correlation between student success short and long term with the amount and quality of support they are provided. I strongly believe that students with disabilities deserve the opportunity to receive educational support in order to live their best life. Decreasing services by implementing cuts will provide them with less opportunities, decrease their quality of life, and have a tremendous negative impact on their future.

As a parent with a child with Down syndrome, my lifelong goal is to provide my son, Linken, with the best opportunities in order for him to be able to reach his full potential. Since he was **two weeks old**, he has been provided with amazing supports that have contributed to the goals he has reached and the potential that is available to him to obtain. He has received early infant development support, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, literacy support, numeracy support, one to one sport coaching, music therapy, and behavior intervention/educational assistant support. Our entire family works hard on a daily basis to better his life! If supports are cut then this will severely limit his ability to grow and live his best left. We would greatly appreciate the school district being able to adequately support him alongside us to see him flourish.

The Down Syndrome Resource Foundation (DSRF) has shown that literacy skills are extremely important and possibly for individuals with Down syndrome to obtain. I believe it is important for the Reading Recovery program to be available for Linken to be able to access to support his ability to obtain literacy skills. We know that he will have trouble learning the literacy skills through the curriculum that is typically taught in the primary grades and thus he will require specialized support to develop his literacy skills. Linken absolutely loves books is trying to learn how to read. We would be extremely grateful if Linken was provided with reading recovery support in order to obtain basic and more advanced literacy skills.

Linken **LOVES music** and comes alive when he is listening to music. I feel music classes will provide Linken the opportunity to be included with his peers that is within his mental capacity. Removing music opportunities within schools would be a detriment to his inclusive opportunities, his mental health, and his best life.

Linken's older sister is really looking forward to being able to participate in additional music opportunities and would be saddened to not be able to participate. Unfortunately due to the cost's associated with providing Linken with his best life opportunities (e.g., therapy's, specialized

equipment) we do not have the financial means to provide his sister with extra-curricular support within the areas of music due to the cost of accessing it. Please consider the impact the budget cut will have on students who would not be able to have access to music if it was not provided within school. Please maintain accessibility for all students.

I think it is important for every child to be provided with what they need to grow and have their best life. What is provided isn't necessarily 'fair' but instead equal in the sense that everyone gets what they need to flourish. I strongly encourage the board to reconsider where the budget cuts are occurring in order to protect the most vulnerable.

Thank you for your time and consideration in my son's bright future.

Danielle Eeuwes – M.Sc.
Behavior Consultant

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From: David Bodrug
To: Trustees
Subject: Re: Please do not cut music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:55:03 PM

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Dear Jordan,

Thank you for reply. My understanding is that there is a vote taking place in the coming days with respect to the budget, and I would urge the SD61 trustees to vote NO to proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school music programs and to help maintain accessibility for all young people.

I that this email be included in correspondence at your April 13, 2021 board meeting.

Best Regards,
David Bodrug

On Mon, Apr 12, 2021 at 4:21 PM Jordan Watters wrote:

> On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.
>
> As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.
>
> We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/
>
> Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf
>
> Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Jordan Watters
>
> **Jordan Watters (she/her)**
> Chair, Board of Education
> Greater Victoria School District No. 61
> Ph: 778-977-2309
> **www.sd61.bc.ca** | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: David Bodrug
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:53 AM
To:
Subject: Please do not cut music programs

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Dear SD61 Trustees,

I know funding is tight right now and can appreciate the difficult decisions you have to make to steward SD61 through this pandemic and beyond. However, cutting music programs and other fine arts programs would be a huge mistake.

Music provides a team learning experience that requires mental dexterity, muscle memory and a sensitivity to others in one's environment that is not replicated in any other field of learning. It is a group activity of the mind and the heart, and so many students have their overall school experience reinforced by these programs.

Further, cutting music programs will impact lower income students the most, as those families are less likely to be able to afford private music education. Music and drama / improv programs provide opportunities for at-risk youth to engage in positive interactions with their peers and connect them with the wider community through performances.

Music programs at public schools, including band and strings, should be accessible to students from at least their first year of middle school, if not before.

I am firmly opposed to what I understand to be significant cuts proposed for middle school music programs and arts programs in general. These programs should not be viewed as optional or extracurricular pursuits.

Sincerely,

David Bodrug
Parent to children at two SD61 schools

From: David Reid
To: Trustees
Subject: Say NO to cuts in music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:32:39 PM

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Monday, April 12th, 2021

Victoria, BC
Dear Trustees:
It has come to my attention that you are considering proposed budget cuts to your elementary and middle school music programs, cuts that will effect a myriad of programs. Perhaps as trustees you did not have musical training and hence missed out on the documented research that wholly supports the benefits of music and arts programs, particularly at early ages:

- improved social and emotional development
- help with cognitive development
- increased motivation
- better attitudes and attendance
- improved academic performance.

Why would trustees want to deny young children the joys and skills that music brings along with these side benefits, and of course, see these benefits overflow into our community?
I have experienced the advantages that music and arts education bring to the students, their schools and communities. For the last 10 years of my career as a teacher, I taught English in a large public high school where one quarter of the student population was engaged with majors in music, dance, drama, screen and visual arts. What a school! What students! What wonderful citizens they have become!
Please vote *NO!* to the proposed cuts to restricting elementary and middle school music programs and help to maintain accessibility for all young people.
Also, please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.
With best wishes…..David Reid

From: Dawn van Galen
To: Trustees
Subject: Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:56:25 AM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,
My name is Dawn van Galen and I am a parent to a grade 6 at Glanford Middle School in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.
This has been an incredibly tough year for all and getting rid of the music program is a mistake. I went through lengths to get my daughter into Glanford mainly because of all the music programs Glanford offered. Music is a way for the kids to destress and connect to each other on a different level. It creates a whole new level of teamwork/team building. It shows kids through music that working together creates something beautiful. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development of children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community. I eagerly wait for my email to pop in of the videos taken at the virtual concerts etc. Parents are not allowed in the school or to attend performances at the school. These are the only things I am sent by teachers that I can enjoy during the pandemic. These classes are very important to me not only as a parent but as an old music student. I grew up playing many instruments and being in the concert choir each year. It is one of the things I really looked forward to as a student. The whole experience was amazing and pushed me in ways I cannot begin to express.
Cutting student-centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.
The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants, and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. This age group has already lost so much. My daughter's Elementary grade 5-year end trip was canceled, her grad ceremony was canceled. All the experiences these kids attend their first 6 years of school to celebrate, we're all canceled last year. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities. Music is that outlet. Music assists with learning, mood, friendships, discipline, and thinking from a different perspective. These are all very important in personal growth and help mold the students in the right direction to be successful. Please do not strip them of these very important opportunities.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Dawn van Galen

From: Geoff & Deb Gaul
To: Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Trustees
Cc: Rob Parker; Alex Lemon; Victor Tymoshuk; James Miller; Jessica Sargent
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts: EA Staffing Adjustment: PLEASE READ AT UPCOMING BD MTG APRIL 13TH.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:55:37 PM

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Hello

My name is Deborah Gaul. Our son - Michael Gaul - is in Grade 6 at Arbutus Middle School. Michael has special needs and receives .5 FTE Education Assistance per week.

I am writing to express our significant disappointment in the School District's proposal to cut EA staffing in the 2021-2022 Budget by $685,907. This amount alone represents 9.6% of the Total District Wide Deficit of $7.1 million.

The proposed « EA Staffing Adjustment » is the LARGEST identifiable line item to be removed in the entire 2021-2022 budget, second only to the Schools - Middle Band programs at $1.02 Million. This budget item disproportionately targets & affects special needs and marginalized children: It is greatly troubling and unconscionable.

1. The «Main Tenents of this Budget » (justifying the proposal) specifies the following points, to which I have the following comments:

- Initiatives have become ingrained over time, without

having (to **sic) examination or prioritization to align to the strategic plan, ***address areas where our students are not experiencing success***, or other areas of focus such as aging infrastructure (e.g. shops). (Pg 2 of Superintendent's recommendations).

- I would argue that but for the daily support of EA's, our special needs children would experience minimal if any success in the regular school curriculum.

- ***Majority*** of our students are ***very successful.***
  - Special Needs children are a minority - and it is for that very reason that they need to be protected and supported, so that they too can experience a successful school experience. They should not be compared to the majority of the students.

- ***However key indicators highlight where we have not moved our students' results over time*** (Pg2 of superintendent's recommendations).
  - As stated above, Special Needs kids should not be compared to the majority of students. Their success indicators should be specific to each individual.

- In the end we must know who our students are, what they need, and how we can create the very best learning environments ***so each student can be successful.*** (Pg 4 of Superintendent's recommendations).

- In order for our Special Needs children to be successful, they individually require the additional daily support of their EA's. This simply puts them on equal grounds with other students. Removing this support necessarily decrease their chances of success.

2. Later in Draft 3 of the budget, specified Reinvestments are Identified to the Balanced Budget (pg 10 of 69):

- Under « Expense » Heading:
  - « ***Add Wage Increases*** & Staffing Levels » $6,905,371
  - « ***Less Wages*** & Benefits from Staffing Savings » $5,844,209.
    - Is there any way to readjust wage increases in a way of keeping in mind the global goal of a balanced budge rather than incurring wage & benefit losses from staffing?

3. Parting Thoughts:

- « However it is our role ..... to make way for implementation of education initiatives ***while balancing legal***, labour, fiscal and facility responsibilities.»
  - The School District, as with any other government funded institution, is legally required to make accommodations for all individuals. As specified in the Ministry of Education 2013 Special Education Policy « All students should have equitable access to

learning, opportunities for achievement, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs. »

- « Lastly the budget is the Board's vehicle to effect true change in the system ***to meet the diverse needs of each student.*** »
  - The « diverse needs of each student » could not be any more apparent than it is for special needs kids. These children absolutely require the assistance of EA's to allow them to participate in meaningful ways not only in their own personal education, but in their overall participation in the classroom.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed cuts to EA funding for the 2021-2022 school year disproportionately targets & affects special needs and marginalized children. It represents approximately 10% of the overall deficit amount of $7.1 million. It is unconscionable and unfair. How does this line up with the School Districts stated policy to provide equitable access and opportunity? These children need our protection and support. We would respectfully submit that the SD 61 not look to removing EA support to our most vulnerable children in order to help balance their 2021-2022 budget.

Thank you for your consideration,

Deborah (& Geoffrey) Gaul

April 12, 2021

Dear SD61 School Board Trustees,

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

I write to voice my strong opposition to the proposed cuts to music programs in elementary and middle schools.

As a parent of two SD61 graduates who participated in SD61's band, jazz band, strings and choir programs, our family knows the critical importance of these programs to young people's psycho-social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development. Making music gives children (as well as youth, adults and elders) means to find self-expression, create community, feel included, develop literacy and numeracy skills, and gain self-confidence and self-esteem. Music is fundamental to culture and to society. Now (with the global pandemic and its impacts on so many facets of our lives) more than ever, we need music programs in our schools so that all of SD61's children, regardless of families' income level or ability to access private lessons, can benefit from high quality musical experiences and education.

Sincerely,

Deborah Rutman, PhD
Victoria BC

From: Diane Osoko
To: Trustees
Subject: School Music Program
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:13:39 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Diane Osoko

Diane

From: Don Lovell
To: Trustees
Subject: Please Maintain Funding for School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:47:52 PM

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I would encourage the Board not to decrease funding for the music programs.
The independent schools have active music programs and the general population of students should have music education as well.
please keep the music funding at the present levels.
please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.
Don Lovell

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

From: Donald Hunt
To: Donald Hunt; Trustees
Subject: Re: Proposed music cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:42:51 PM

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Please include my letter (below) in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Donald Hunt
Director of Music
Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria, BC

https://www.christchurchcathedral.bc.ca/

From: Donald Hunt
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 12:41 PM
To: Donald Hunt <> **Subject:** Proposed music cuts

Dear SD61 Trustees,

When I was in elementary and middle school, I was fortunate to be able to participate in a robust, publicly funded music program, which included choirs, strings ensembles, and concert bands. This all fed into an equally immersive all-city high school program of honour choirs and a full symphony orchestra. This well-stewarded and well-structured program, offered by the Halifax School Board, provided me with the necessary broad musical education to become a professional organist and conductor, after studying at McGill University and taking up organ scholarships in the UK, including at St Paul's Cathedral, London.

However, I'm not writing to you as a private citizen, I'm writing to you as Director of Music of one of this city's important musical institutions (Christ Church Cathedral), which operates four choirs, employs two full-time organist/conductors, offers numerous scholarships to university students as well as elementary and middle school learners, and presents over forty concerts per year, in partnership with our many neighbours and friends.

Restricting band programs to grade 8 and up, eliminating elementary string programs, and axing about twelve music teaching positions will have knock-on effects on the high school programs into which they feed. This will, in turn, have catastrophic effects on our local musical organizations, including the Victoria Symphony, Victoria Baroque, Pacific Opera Victoria, and Christ Church Cathedral, who draw from these groups.

Others will undoubtedly write letters, citing evidence of how a good music education *serves* other subjects – that students who have a good musical grounding are shown to be good at other things as a result, and that learning to play an instrument helps with grit, determination, and work ethic.

All of this is true. But beyond all of that, music is important on its own. Music programs are the only curricular cuts proposed in this budget, which shows that this school board does not value musical education. They are wrong not to.

No curricular cuts are acceptable when it comes to public education of our children. We need to be educating and edifying our youth abundantly with the greatest diversity possible. In a year where the arts have been ravaged by a pandemic, in-person concerts are impossible, we have witnessed people seeking out music and arts via online performances on a huge scale. Please do not diminish the importance of music in this world.

Imagine a world without history, language, science, math. It's impossible. A world without music is equally unthinkable.

Sincerely,
Donald Hunt
Director of Music, Christ Church Cathedral

Donald Hunt
Director of Music
Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria, BC tel:
https://www.christchurchcathedral.bc.ca/

From: Doreen McBride
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to music program in SD61
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:49:27 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

With best regards,

Doreen McBride

From: Kim Morris
To: Victoria Hanley
Subject: FW: Support for Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:13:47 PM

Correspondence
Kim Morris
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria BC V8Z 1E8
Phone: 250-475-4108
Cell: 236-969-0661
www.sd61.bc.ca
Email: kmorris@sd61.bc.ca
Twitter: @KimKMorris

From: Elena Pnevmonidou
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:12 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc: Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Kim Morris <kmorris@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Support for Music Programs

Dear Jordan,
I am here resending our email exchange from this past February. Back then, there was only talk of grade 5 strings being cut, and I wrote you a letter in support of the G5 strings. And back then, you reassured me that no specific program had been identified for reduction. This week, however, we learn that the entire Middle School level music program – choir, band, strings – is on the chopping block, that is, in addition to grade 5 strings.
I am absolutely shocked that music is to be gutted out of middle schools, and I am frustrated to say the least about your communication with me, which does not inspire much trust in the process.
The letter that I wrote back February concerned grade 5 strings, but it was written through the experience of my grade 7 twins, who both benefitted from that program at SJD and who are presently enrolled in almost every single music opportunity available to them at Central. There is not much more I can add to the letter. It covers a range of topics such as:
-the benefits of music education for other academic disciplines and skills
-the social justice dimension of music education in public schools
-the cooperative learning in music education
-the significance of music performance for a child's growth through the K-12 grades
-the mental health impact of music education
-lessons to be learned from music education during the pandemic
I am therefore inserting the original letter here again and am also expressing the wish that it be

included in documents you consider during your different budget meetings and consultations.
Sincerely,
Elena Pnevmonidou
Dear School Board Trustee:

I am writing to urge you not to cancel the existing Grade 5 Strings programs in our school district. As a parent of two children who benefitted from the Grade 5 Strings program, I want to express here what a transformative educational experience this program provides to many children and to share some thoughts about the importance of Strings in the wider community.
I understand that one consideration for cutting Grade 5 Strings is an apparent inequity, namely that not every school in the district offers a Strings program. This is indeed an inequity, as some children do not have the opportunity to learn a string instrument. However, the remedy cannot be to cut all Strings programs and thus to deprive all children of this valuable educational opportunity. I cannot see how gutting educational programs and diminishing learning opportunities can serve equity. If equity is indeed what you are concerned with, then a more meaningful response would be to think of ways to expand Grade 5 offerings. A first step towards that goal would be to protect existing programs and then to develop a strategy to bring this program to schools do not yet have it. This strategy might also include reinstating the application process for schools that want to establish a Strings program.
A meaningful application of the concept of equity would also consider its social dimension. K-12 public schools are at the heart of our communities. They play a vital role in building an inclusive and just society at the local level from the ground up, by making it possible for children of all backgrounds to benefit from programs that would otherwise only be accessible to a select few. This is especially the case for music education, where private lessons are simply unaffordable for many families. Cancelling Grade 5 Strings would make learning a string instrument an elite privilege that only socioeconomically advantaged children can enjoy. If your decision is driven by equity considerations, how would this serve equity?
The value of music education is well-recognized. Countless studies have shown that it has many benefits far beyond the intrinsic value of learning to play an instrument. This is especially the case in primary education where so many of the building blocks and foundations are laid that are vital for children to thrive as they progress through to higher grades. Such benefits include enhanced literacy, numeracy, and language learning skills; enhanced memory; better study habits and learning motivation; improved problem-solving; integrative, interdisciplinary thinking; teamwork and cooperative learning; better social skills; leadership; improved mental health; etc.
Having seen my children go through the Grade 5 Strings program and having witnessed firsthand what a transformative, life-changing experience this has been for them, I can confirm what these studies have revealed about the value of music education. I can see the impact of all the benefits of primary-school music education at work in my children's experiences at middle school.
What is so unique about the Grade 5 Strings program, and what distinguishes it from other in-class musical training (such learning the recorder or some basics of the ukulele) is the experience of being part of an ensemble where different instruments play different parts; the accelerated progression through music theory and skills; and the performative dimension. At several key moments during the school year when there are special assemblies, the Strings are an integral part of the event. The children study and rehearse for these events and perform for their peers and the parents. They also join other Strings ensembles from other schools and perform together at the University of Victoria. No other primary school program provides children these kinds of opportunities to learn creatively, collaboratively, performatively, and to build their confidence as learners, leaders, and artists.

My children are now in Grade 7, and they are participating in every single musical opportunity that is available to them at school. This passion for music is not unique to my children. A good many children in their cohort, many of whom had participated in a Grade 5 Strings program, are passionately committed to music at school. Without being asked, many routinely stay behind at recess to practice together, and many get up extra early most days of the week in order to play in the ensembles that meet before the start of the school day. I have no doubt whatsoever that the experience in the Grade 5 Strings program was pivotal in enabling them to thrive the way they do in the middle school music programs. There is a trickle-up effect that you must recognize, namely that cutting Grade 5 Strings will set back the middle school Strings program by a whole year. Given how many foundational musical skills are developed in Grade 5 Strings, this will, over the long run, adversely affect the quality of middle school music programs as a whole.

In closing, I would like to share some reflections concerning school during the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learned that we must carry beyond the pandemic. We all know how important good mental health and a feeling of safety and confidence about things are for children to thrive. During this pandemic, schools and teachers have been working very hard to provide children with that sense of safety and wellbeing, and I would say that music education has played a critical role in supporting children though this unprecedented crisis.

For me and other parents, one of the most moving experiences his year has been to witness how our children worked together and with the music teachers to develop creative solutions to restart the music program in September. All year they have been working hard with a common sense of purpose to make it work and to create music together in spite of the pandemic. In December, the children launched their first series of online concerts, which were a remarkable celebration of their resilience and artistry. The music program taught them a lot more than music skills: The children learned that even in the face of a global pandemic they are not powerless, but that, working together, they can defy odds, overcome challenges, and express and empower themselves. What a valuable life lesson to learn!

Middle school offers a range of different music options, but in elementary school, Grade 5 Strings is the only program that offers children such valuable learning opportunities and life lessons. I urge you to do what you can to protect the Grade 5 Strings program and to work on a strategy to expand the program so that all elementary schools in the district can offer Strings.

Elena Pnevmonidou (she/her)
Director of European Studies
Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies
University of Victoria

From: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Sent: February 19, 2021 10:26 AM
To: Elena Pnevmonidou
Cc: Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Kim Morris <kmorris@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Letter in Support of Grade 5 Strings Progrma

Dear Elena Pnevmonidou,

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your letter advocating for strings programming in our school district.

Our annual budget consultation process has only just begun and at this time no specific programs have been identified for reduction, expansion, or elimination. Currently our focus is on exploring the areas in our Strategic Plan where we require growth and once those are identified plans will be developed to ensure resources are appropriately allocated.
I encourage you to engage with this process and share your priorities and perspectives with us as we develop the budget over the course of the next few months. I believe our March 8th Operations Planning and Policy Standing Committee is the next opportunity to engage with the budget process.
I appreciate you taking the time to share your experience and perspective with us.
Sincerely,
Jordan

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Elena Pnevmonidou
Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2021 6:34 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Letter in Support of Grade 5 Strings Progrma

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear School Board Trustee, Jordan Watters:

I am writing to urge you not to cancel the existing Grade 5 Strings programs in our school district. As a parent of two children who benefitted from the Grade 5 Strings program, I want to express here what a transformative educational experience this program provides to many children and to share some thoughts about the importance of Strings in the wider community. I understand that one consideration for cutting Grade 5 Strings is an apparent inequity, namely that not every school in the district offers a Strings program. This is indeed an inequity, as some children do not have the opportunity to learn a string instrument. However, the remedy cannot be to cut all Strings programs and thus to deprive all children of this valuable educational opportunity. I cannot see how gutting educational programs and diminishing learning opportunities can serve equity. If equity is indeed what you are concerned with, then a more meaningful response would be to think of ways to expand Grade 5 offerings. A first step towards that goal would be to protect existing programs and then to develop a strategy to bring this program to schools do not yet have it. This strategy might also include reinstating the application process for schools that want to establish a Strings program.
A meaningful application of the concept of equity would also consider its social dimension. K-

12 public schools are at the heart of our communities. They play a vital role in building an inclusive and just society at the local level from the ground up, by making it possible for children of all backgrounds to benefit from programs that would otherwise only be accessible to a select few. This is especially the case for music education, where private lessons are simply unaffordable for many families. Cancelling Grade 5 Strings would make learning a string instrument an elite privilege that only socioeconomically advantaged children can enjoy. If your decision is driven by equity considerations, how would this serve equity?

The value of music education is well-recognized. Countless studies have shown that it has many benefits far beyond the intrinsic value of learning to play an instrument. This is especially the case in primary education where so many of the building blocks and foundations are laid that are vital for children to thrive as they progress through to higher grades. Such benefits include enhanced literacy, numeracy, and language learning skills; enhanced memory; better study habits and learning motivation; improved problem-solving; integrative, interdisciplinary thinking; teamwork and cooperative learning; better social skills; leadership; improved mental health; etc.

Having seen my children go through the Grade 5 Strings program and having witnessed firsthand what a transformative, life-changing experience this has been for them, I can confirm what these studies have revealed about the value of music education. I can see the impact of all the benefits of primary-school music education at work in my children's experiences at middle school.

What is so unique about the Grade 5 Strings program, and what distinguishes it from other in-class musical training (such learning the recorder or some basics of the ukulele) is the experience of being part of an ensemble where different instruments play different parts; the accelerated progression through music theory and skills; and the performative dimension. At several key moments during the school year when there are special assemblies, the Strings are an integral part of the event. The children study and rehearse for these events and perform for their peers and the parents. They also join other Strings ensembles from other schools and perform together at the University of Victoria. No other primary school program provides children these kinds of opportunities to learn creatively, collaboratively, performatively, and to build their confidence as learners, leaders, and artists.

My children are now in Grade 7, and they are participating in every single musical opportunity that is available to them at school. This passion for music is not unique to my children. A good many children in their cohort, many of whom had participated in a Grade 5 Strings program, are passionately committed to music at school. Without being asked, many routinely stay behind at recess to practice together, and many get up extra early most days of the week in order to play in the ensembles that meet before the start of the school day. I have no doubt whatsoever that the experience in the Grade 5 Strings program was pivotal in enabling them to thrive the way they do in the middle school music programs. There is a trickle-up effect that you must recognize, namely that cutting Grade 5 Strings will set back the middle school Strings program by a whole year. Given how many foundational musical skills are developed in Grade 5 Strings, this will, over the long run, adversely affect the quality of middle school music programs as a whole.

In closing, I would like to share some reflections concerning school during the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learned that we must carry beyond the pandemic. We all know how important good mental health and a feeling of safety and confidence about things are for children to thrive. During this pandemic, schools and teachers have been working very hard to provide children with that sense of safety and wellbeing, and I would say that music education has played a critical role in supporting children though this unprecedented crisis.

For me and other parents, one of the most moving experiences his year has been to witness how our children worked together and with the music teachers to develop creative solutions to

restart the music program in September. All year they have been working hard with a common sense of purpose to make it work and to create music together in spite of the pandemic. In December, the children launched their first series of online concerts, which were a remarkable celebration of their resilience and artistry. The music program taught them a lot more than music skills: The children learned that even in the face of a global pandemic they are not powerless, but that, working together, they can defy odds, overcome challenges, and express and empower themselves. What a valuable life lesson to learn!

Middle school offers a range of different music options, but in elementary school, Grade 5 Strings is the only program that offers children such valuable learning opportunities and life lessons. I urge you to do what you can to protect the Grade 5 Strings program and to work on a strategy to expand the program so that all elementary schools in the district can offer Strings.

Sincerely,

Elena Pnevmonidou
Elena Pnevmonidou (she/her)
Director of European Studies
Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies
University of Victoria

From: Élise
To: Trustees
Subject: please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:18:59 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Thank you,

Élise Lemoine

From: Elizabeth Borek
To: Trustees
Subject: PLEASE DO NOT DIMINISH THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN VICTORIA
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:59:18 PM

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Dear SD61 Trustees

Dear SD61 Trustees

I have recently learned that School District 61 in Victor is proposing major cuts to the elementary and middle schools music programs in an effort to address a $7 million deficit. This would require terminating nine full time music teaching contracts at different schools across the district as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs and numerous other musical initiatives.

These cuts will have a lasting impact not only on the children but also on arts and culture of Victoria. The rich cultural life in Victoria, including the art of music in its many forms and levels, is a major contributor to the quality of life in Victoria. We are so lucky to live in this environment.

The benefits to children is immeasurable as music is a constructive means to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, a sense of accomplishment and the joy of creating something larger than themselves.

Young children are already under stress due to the impact of COVID. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs. Please take a long term view and do not succumb to the short term advantage to cut the deficit.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO!

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Respectfully,
Elizabeth Borek

From: Elodie Button
To: Trustees
Subject: Budget and Music
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:08:38 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

In this time of extreme difficulty, we have all been relying on the arts to hold us together: film, music, television, visual art, podcasts. In the absence of community and closeness, music and film are what help us remember that we are still connected. I'm sure this has been true for you personally.

Our role as a society and school board is to support young people to grow into themselves. This is not possible without the arts. Our school programs must include fulsome opportunities for self-exploration, creativity. Our children need to continue having the opportunities to learn these things, not only for their own well being, but for the well being of society as a whole.

Now is not the time to cut funding to music education.

I implore you to reconsider your budget. Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Sincerely,
Elodie Button

From: Emilia Vozian
To: Trustees
Subject: SD61 Budget Plans for Music
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:53:37 PM

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To whom it may concern,

First of all, I'd like to express my deep gratitude for the SD61 education I have been receiving as a middle school student; particularly the musical opportunities, which is why I was horrified when I learned about the proposed budget cuts.
My message is this: please do not cut back on music programs. They are a critical, integral part of our schools. Music forms a close community where many students belong. It is a passion, an art, joy for the spirit. Whether it is something students do for fun, or the career they aspire to pursue, the benefits of music are innumerable: students learn dedication, discipline, self-awareness and control, the power of uniting in collaboration with others, and important lessons about themselves as individuals.

A music education in itself is an enriching life experience (with benefits ranging from the mind, to health, to learning...there are few things that stimulate the brain like music does), thousands of scientific and academic studies have proved this with reliable data that is worth looking into.

As a grade 8 student, I have been a part of almost all offered music programs so far. From singing to band to strings, it is one of the best parts of my education, and life. It is the reason I am excited to go to school every single day. The reason I wake up early every morning to join my peers in the gift of having a music program. No matter how tired I may be, the challenges I am faced with, or the emotions I feel: I know that no matter what, once I set up my chair and music stand, everything will fall into place and will be forgotten as I play; even if just for a 45min class. It centers me, helps me recharge, and focus in other classes. Berthold Aueerbach's quote really resonates with me: *"Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life"*. Music is crucial for many students' overall mental health.

Not only this, music brings so much joy to students, schools, and communities. Connections are fostered and life-long memories are created. My music teachers are people I really look up to, some of my best mentors. In a world of ever-rising virtual technology, music is a practice of hands-on mindfulness that must be part of education. Furthermore, music in schools provides opportunities for families who cannot afford private lessons.

I have shared my experience, but I guarantee that many, many students can clearly attest to the importance of music as a part of our education. I repeat: music is a critical, integral part of our schools that so many care about. I have contacted you because the loss that future students (such as my younger sister, who is very excited to join music groups next year in middle school), will unknowingly experience will be tremendous, should you continue with the proposed plan to largely remove music from schools up to Gr. 8. It pains me very much and

disappoints me that they may not be as lucky as I was to have the wonder of music offered in their early lives as growing individuals. I cannot imagine my life without music; my love for it grew predominantly because of the possibilities I was offered at school. I truly hope many more students will have the chance to have music as a part of their future.

I understand you must be in a difficult situation, however I must respectfully implore you to carefully consider the severely devastating impact taking away music will have on the district; especially students. Please, please do not ignore the value music has in our education.

If desired, you may use this letter in the agenda package.
Thank you, sincerely,

Emilia Vozian
A SD61 student, and musician
"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything." - Plato

From:	Emily and Meic Thomas
To:	Trustees; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Shelley Green; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker
Cc:	Upcoming vote re: Music and Inclusive Education
Subject:	Monday, April 12, 2021 10:25:10 PM
Date:	

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Emily Thomas, and I am a parent of two school age children in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61. My daughters look forward to and long for opportunities to develop their musical skills. My eldest, now in grade 5, has participated in the Island Ukuleles program since grade 2, and has found incredible success and growth. The skills she has learned there have translated to success in choir, on other strings instruments, and self-taught piano. It has also presented leadership opportunities and strong friend connections around the shared interest of music. On the cusp of Middle School, she is now eagerly looking forward to the music program at Cedar Hill School.

I feel that it is important for me to remind you that Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level is a step backwards. These proposed cuts are making the divide between public and private schools more pronounced, where music and the arts (along with science, technology, engineering and maths!) are encouraged and embraced. **Music and the arts should be part of the foundation of public school, opportunities accessible to all.**

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact all students, eliminating opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years need support and opportunities to help them grow into happy and healthy members of our communities. **Music can be such an incredible outlet and inspiration.**

Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft. These cuts will take these incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. Please do not disadvantage students in this way. Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first. Let us make a stand together and keep music and arts programming in elementary and middle schools.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Emily Thomas

Sent to:
Board of Trustees - trustees@sd61.bc.ca
Jordan Watters - jwatters@sd61.bc.ca
Diane McNally - dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca
Nicole Duncan - nduncan@sd61.bc.ca
Tom Ferris - tferris@sd61.bc.ca
Angie Hentze - ahentze@sd61.bc.ca
Elaine Leonard - eleonard@sd61.bc.ca
Ryan Painter - rpainter@sd61.bc.ca
Rob Paynter - rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca
Ann Whiteaker - awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca
Superintendent of Schools: Shelley Green - sgreen@sd61.bc.ca
Deputy Superintendent of Schools: Deb Whitten - dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca
Associate Superintendent: Harold Caldwell - hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca

Emily Nagelbach
Head, Winds & Brass Department
Victoria Conservatory of Music

April 12, 2021

Jordan Watters
Board Chair, SD#61 Board of Education
jwatters@sd61.bc.ca

Dear Chair Watters,

I am writing to you today as both a parent of three children in SD #61 and in my capacity as a professional musician, where I am Head of the Winds & Brass Department of the Victoria Conservatory of Music, Second Flute/Piccolo with the Vancouver Island Symphony, an active freelance musician, and a private music teacher.

Like many students, my early experiences with music in school, beginning with band in Grade 5, had a huge impact on the trajectory of my life. For those with a passion and curiosity for music, having a consistent and well-rounded musical program is key to the future development and success of all areas of their life, not just with their musical endeavours. School music programs do not benefit only those looking for a career in music, they benefit every student in the school, just as music touches the lives of those around the globe every day.

Music is an incredibly important part of everyone's lives and this has never been more apparent than during the last year in this pandemic. When the world shut down last year, we collectively turned to music. Music has helped us find the meaning and joy in life, express and explore our feelings, and support our positive mental health during these difficult times. I have carefully watched my own students in their lessons over the past year, witnessing how much they have been struggling, and observing how much music has provided stability, inspiration and contributed positively to their life.

Personally, my son started middle school this year and participating in the Grade 6 band and strings programs at Shoreline has been a highlight of his year. It is unimaginable what it would be like for him if this program was eliminated next year, not to mention for the new students coming into Grade 6 who have been eagerly awaiting joining these programs. A few grades behind, my daughter is excited to be starting the strings program in Grade 5 at Marigold. The elementary strings program is a vital program that not only transitions students from general music education

to more specialized music education, but also forms key bonds between elementary schools and their family middle schools through group performances and activities.

Although I understand the difficult situation the Board faces in regards to budget cuts, I would ask you to reconsider the cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs that serve to benefit all students across our city. Arts are not an optional part of life, they are essential. Our students and children deserve a well-rounded education that reflects this.

Sincerely,

Emily Nagelbach

CC: Diane McNally
Nicole Duncan
Tom Ferris
Angie Hentze
Elaine Leonard
Ryan Painter
Rob Paynter
Ann Whiteaker
Shelley Green
Deb Whitten
Harold Caldwell

From: Emlyn Sheeley
To: Trustees
Subject: Save SD61 Music
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:49:33 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

Straight to the point, you cannot make these major cuts to the music programs in schools.

Music is a refuge, a place to find oneself, an expression of joy and passion, a form of physical activity (of which you are normally very reluctant to remove). Cutting these programs will cut the **most** beneficial part of hundreds of student's educations. Without music, many souls are lost. Globally we are currently trying to find ways to help with the mental health of the children in our community, music aids in that. How can you possibly feel that music would be an appropriate first choice to abolish?

Not only are you withholding a key component in a child's education as well as their cognitive and emotional development, but also taking away many adults' primary source of income. It is not fair to tell musicians that their livelihood isn't important, that it isn't worth saving. You have no idea how many children are helped, nay saved, due to a music teacher in one of your schools. Is that really not worth saving?

So please, I implore you, save music in the schools. Do not cut the music programs. Safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting **NO**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Emlyn Sheeley

From: ERIKA MACTAVISH
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Save music in the schools!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:22:28 PM

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Hello!
Please include this email in the board meeting agenda package.
Please do not cut funding to the music program!! Why is this always the first thing to be cut??? It is 100% fact that kids grades and mental health will suffer. Studies have proven that music helps kids learn better, it accelerates brain development, particularly in the areas of language acquisition and reading skills.
I have seen this in both my kids. Music made my son do better in school. The year he started band and developed a passion for percussion was the first year I saw him start to put an effort in his school work. Throughout the pandemic, the thing that put a smile on his face during such tough times was when he was drumming.
Do not make this mistake! Save the music program!!!
Thank you,
Erika MacTavish

From: Erin Fisher
To: Trustees
Subject: Middle school music cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:44:47 PM

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Hello,

I've been a music teacher in BC for the last 17 years, and taught privately at the Victoria Conservatory of music. Students who studied with me almost always took both strings and band in middle schools. That opportunity to explore and study instruments in a publicly funded way is so important. It opens the world of music to students who might not be able to afford to try out instruments, or to learn that they have an affinity for composition or the arts. Although music is displayed as muse-induced and talent-inspired in film and books, it's just as focused a study as math or sports or language, and should stay on the school curriculum. Studying music should not only be available as a bonus to families with financial means, especially when—like learning any language—instrument and music study benefits from starting at a young age.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Thank you,

Erin Fisher

--

Erin Fisher
Victoria, BC, Canada

From: Eva Kiess
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to your elementary and middle school music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:36:11 PM

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Dear SD61 Trustees,

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

I am writing on behalf of the Victoria Symphony (VS) to express our grave concern over the proposed cuts to your elementary and middle school music programs. These cuts, including cuts to a long-term and valuable partnership with the Victoria Symphony, would have a long-lasting negative impact on the children in our public schools and we ask that you re-consider.

The VS believes that all children, regardless of their socio-economic or family situation, should be provided with access to the proven benefits that a musical education provides. The idea that only students attending private schools have access to musicians and musical experiences of the highest quality is obviously exclusive and works against our basic belief that access to music and art should be universal. Music is one of the most profound and tangible means of human expression and should be accessible to everyone. Understanding and enjoying music requires a unique body of knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking, and these are learned. VS Education Programs have long strived to make this learning accessible to as broad a range of demographics in our community as possible.

"VS Education Concerts" are part of the proposed cuts. These events have been specially designed to engage elementary and early middle school students and have been subsidized by the VS in the past because we know how important they are. In recent years, partnerships with local school districts like SD61 have allowed us to reach over 10,000 students each season by inviting them to attend a live symphony concert in person during school hours. Over the years we have been working to deepen the educational impact of these concerts by providing teachers in the district with lesson plans and teacher workshops designed by award-winning educator and Orff specialist Marcelline Moody. We have also offered classroom visits by VS musicians who create a personal connection with the students and prepare them for what they are to hear at the live concert event. During the pandemic, with the support of the BC Arts Council we have continued to work hard to create digital learning modules for these concerts that we plan to make available to all school districts in the region for free. The notion that there might not even be a teacher able to work with us to connect with students in SD61 is heartbreaking.

Advancing musical education for young people is not just about guaranteeing a future audience for non-corporate music, it is about providing as many people as we can with musical literacy and creating more vibrant and well-rounded informed communities in the process.

Please vote NO! to the proposed cuts to restricting elementary and middle school music programs and help to maintain accessibility for all young people.

Matthew White,
CEO Victoria Symphony

From: Falk Herwig
To: Trustees
Subject: Email letter in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13 - opposition to proposed cuts to the music program
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:17:20 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Superintendent, Trustees,
I am strongly opposed to the proposed cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs. Every child has the right to experience the incredible power that learning about and performing music provides, as part of their academic, creative, emotional, and social development during their school years. The transferable life skills that music education helps to develop are what powers our youth to become the creative thinkers and leaders we need in every profession. I have been supporting the Victoria Conservatory of Music in their effort to support the free programs in 15 SD61 Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. Both of my daughters of benefited greatly form the SD61 music program, more so than from any other aspect of the school problem outside the core requirements. Victoria as a community benefits greatly from a diverse and rich musical community, and the SD61 are a key part of this. Cutting the music program questions whether "The student experience is at the heart of all we do in SD61" is a true statement.

As a parent of two SD61 students and supporter of our Victoria music community I strongly oppose the proposed cuts to the SD61 music program.

With kind regards,
Falk Herwig.

—
Dr Falk Herwig

From: Faye Cook
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include at the next board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:23:31 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs. I have enjoyed the many concerts my grandchildren performed at and have seen them grow in their interest and proficiency in music. I understand that COVID has probably wreaked havoc with the budget during this pandemic, but cutting music is not a good way of helping climb out of a deficit.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Faye Cook, Victoria, BC

***

From: Fiona
To: Trustees
Subject: Music program cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:58:11 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include this email in the board meeting package.

Please reconsider the proposed music program cuts.

My sisters, my daughters and I have all been privileged enough to experience school district 61 music programs. Being taught at an early age inspired a life long love of music appreciation and enjoyment for my family. My sisters and I joined the mount Doug reunion band for their anniversary and now also all sing in community choirs. It provides balance. My daughters are both pursuing careers in engineering yet their enjoyment of music and singing remains with them. An appreciation of different forms of art at an early age provides balance amongst the various academic subjects. Both are equally important.

Please reconsider the cuts and support music. I would have appreciated further time to complete the survey.

Thank you for your time.

Fiona Crisp
Current Reynolds music parent.
Former Arbutus and Frank Hobbs music parent.
Former proud member of music at Fairburn , Arbutus and Mount Doug.

From: Fiona Millard
To: Trustees
Subject: April 13th Board meeting : school music programmes
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:03:08 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Good afternoon,

I am very concerned that once again the School District is considering cutting the school strings and other music programmes.

I cannot emphasise enough how valuable this programme is, not only for the Community but for those teachers and students involved.

For students, particularly perhaps including some of those who are not interested in sports, it is a wonderful outlet for their prospective talents maybe unknown at the outset; it is a focus for them, a discipline, brain-training, a sense of belonging to a group, social interaction and above all a sense of achievment of which they and their families can be proud.

I myself, started playing the violin in a group class at the age of 13 at school in the U.K. now 60 years ago! After a couple of years I started having private lessons while continuing in a school quartet, and orchestra. Since then without interruption, I have played in orchestras both in a youth orchestra (travelling with them to Germany), summer music camp, and the remainder in Community orchestras in my adult life. It has been a highlight for me, given me so much pleasure and an everlasting love of music. I still continue having fun playing in quartets on a regular basis; a welcome way to hopefully keep the brain active at my age!

So please do not deny these young people the opportunity for this very valued music education. Who knows where there might be hidden talent otherwise? I know they will derive much pleasure and satisfaction from taking part in this vital programme.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my point of view and please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Sincerely.

Fiona Millard PhD

From: Frances Aknai
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to Elementary & Middle School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:26:08 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.
Frances Aknai

From: Frances and Tony White
To: Trustees
Subject: Music in Schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:44:19 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Good morning:
It is with dismay that I read the Victoria School District is proposing to make drastic cuts to the music programs in schools.
It is in the schools that many children are introduced to this form of artistic expression: many owe a lifelong love of music to dedicated instructors who they first encountered in their formative years.
Not every child has the opportunity to have private lessons.
It is imperative that any child in district 61 who has a musical inclination should have the opportunity to have this interest developed.....even those who are initially disinclined might grow to enjoy the experience with an enthusiastic educator!
Yours very sincerely,
Frances White

PLEASE include my letter in correspondence at the next Board Meeting

From: Frances Kinloch
To: Trustees
Subject: Re: Music program budget cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:52:10 AM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

This is a note to clarify that I would like the letter below to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Thank you!

On Sun, Apr 11, 2021 at 12:55 PM Frances Kinloch wrote:

> To The District Administration and Board of Trustees,
>
> Music and making music is a core value and practice of our family. Over the past several years our family has been uniquely connected to several of the music programs and teachers here in Victoria.
>
> Both our daughters have taken part in the music programs Monterrey and Lansdowne. We have often praised the public school system for bringing music and learning about music available to all. Our youngest daughter Ramona is currently at Monterrey and before the beginning of the pandemic was in the band taking the clarinet with Ms. Dyler.
>
> For our eldest daughter Roxanne, the music program at Lansdowne was integral not just to the development of her talent but also to her confidence and friendships. She was in grade 6 band with and then followed her true passion of singing and sang in two choirs led by Mr. Rawson and Mr. Georgeson. She still counts Mr. G as one of her favourite teachers ever. I went to Lansdowne Jr High and seeing Mr. G laugh and conduct the kids always reminded me of my time in Jr High band with my favourite teacher, one still fondly missed by many, Mr. John Fawcett.
>
> Roxanne is now at Oak Bay and in four choirs working with Tina Horwood and Mr. Steven Price. When I asked Roxanne if she would be in the choir at the high school level if she had not been in one at Lansdowne she said "*probably not- I would have likely taken other electives*". She now counts Ms. Tina as on her list of all-time favourite teachers and has recently applied to work as a teacher's assistant for one of the choirs when she reaches grade 11. We cannot imagine what Roxy's life would be like if she had not found these musical activities in middle school.
>
> As well as being high users of music programs, my husband, Jon Goody is a singer in a popular local band called Bobby Dazzler. The band is made up of seven members, three of which are middle school/elementary music teachers, Jennifer

Kelly (Glanford Middle School), Arlene Salido (Mackenzie Elementary) and Cindy Romphf (Cedar Hill Middle School). We are appalled that they might all lose their livelihoods. If our friends lose their jobs their lives will change and this might even mean they need to leave Bobby Dazzler to focus on new jobs or finding suitable work. I offer this hypothetical to illustrate how making these cuts might affect music-making for the whole city.

We know intimately how hard our friends work and how passionate they are in helping kids learn about music. Arlene's elementary school choir recently won CBC's Music Class Challenge for 2020 and she was beaming with pride and joy when she explained how hard the kids worked. Jen and Cindy regale us with every student's success and all the joyful teaching moments. We enjoy supporting them in their fundraisers and at all the events they create.

One thing I've come to learn about music teachers, they are never slackers. I have witnessed many iffy or lazy math and science teachers but I have never observed or been taught by a half-hearted music teacher. They all do so much more than classroom teaching. They all give way more time outside school hours to plan and execute musical activities, clubs and events. This effort builds positive school culture in the here and now and the legacy of this effort is felt for decades. Be it by the individual student who can remember the moment of playing their french horn at Epcot centre in Florida and feel the achievement and joy of that time in their present-day; or by the people who build on their elementary foundation skills and become musical culture makers in their own right as adults. What a dull and lifeless world it would be without as many people as possible being encouraged to make and share music?

If the programs were weak perhaps they would need an overhaul but this is simply not the case. The programs are full and well-loved. It is also likely that it will be impossible to bring these programs back once cut. There is abundant research to back up the benefits of learning music at a young age; regardless of socioeconomic background, students involved in music have significantly higher standardized test scores than students not involved in music. Learning musical skills can aid language development, literacy, numeracy, measures of intelligence, general attainment, creativity, fine motor coordination, concentration, self-confidence, emotional sensitivity, social skills, teamwork, self-discipline, and relaxation (Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga,1999; Hallam, 2010; Johnson and Memmott, 2006;) A brilliant study for school officials to familiarize themselves with by Campbell, Connell and Beegle (2007). These researchers interviewed and summarized adolescents' expressed meanings of music in and out of school. They identified five integral themes for kids: (1) identity formation in and through music, (2) emotional benefits, (3) music's life benefits, including character-building and life skills, (4) social benefits, and (5) positive impact of school music programs and their teachers. The authors ultimately conclude that music is a necessary component of young life.

We cannot fathom what a music program would be like if everyone was starting as a beginner in high school. Elementary and Middle school is the time for elementary learning levels and exploration- getting a taste for new things. Your plan will dumb everything down. I can see how much more open my kids were when they were under 12; suggesting they join a choir or take up an instrument was met with agreement. High schoolers need agency and autonomy, they are naturally resistant to too much parental influence. Many would rather fly under the radar and try and

look cool than look like a beginner. Grade 8 and high school is just too late a capture point for many students. I also do not like to think of the pain and pressure that this new late format would put on a teacher like Tina Horwood who already gives 110% to the Oak Bay Music Program.

It shocks us to the core that we have to fight for music teachers and programs. School officials need to reflect on their values and what kind of uninspiring system they are creating.

Officials must rethink the proposed budget. Our family adamantly disagrees with this current plan.

Sincerely,

Frances Kinloch, Jon Goody, Roxanne Goody & Ramona Goody

Frances Kinloch

From:
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:43:54 PM
Importance: High

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,
My name is Francesca Behrens, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding music and Inclusive Education funding in School District 61.
I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for children and young people's social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards, not just for the children affected but also for an entire community.
Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first but is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact students' everyday lives in their schools.
The proposed funding reduction for the following programs: Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day, and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.
These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging, and enthusiastic education approaches. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut which would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.
I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.
I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.
Respectfully,
Francesca Behrens

From: Community Engagement
To: Budget
Cc: Victoria Hanley; Kim Morris
Subject: FW: Budget Proposal
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:28:18 AM
Attachments: image001.png
image002.png
image003.png
image004.png

Hi Vicki,
This is the first email to community that is asking us to include the correspondence in the Board's agenda.

Lisa McPhail
Manager, Communications & Community Engagement
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Office: 250.475.4103
Cell: 778.679.5049
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

From: Gabrielle Campbell
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:29 PM
To: Community Engagement <Community@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Budget Proposal

Please put this in the agenda for today's board meeting

Dear Trustees,

I am writing on behalf of my fellow participants of the Cedar Hill French Band, Choir and Strings in 7th grade in protest of your desire to destroy the middle school music programs.

I speak for all of us when I say that I am absolutely appalled at your decision. Music is an incredible outlet for emotion and soul, and binds us together in ways that can only be described as magical. To provide that opportunity to young people such as us is one of the greatest blessings you can give.

And to take that away is one of the worst things possible that you could do to us.

This pandemic has been life-altering for the world as a whole, and has directly affected my peers and I in many ways that have been extremely challenging to process and adapt to. For many of us, the band, choir and string ensembles have been some of the very few safe environments and spaces to connect with each other, and laugh with each other, and have fun with each other.

And I am outraged that you could ever think, for one second, that shutting down and removing that space is acceptable. It is NOT, and never will BE acceptable.

In the two years I have attended Cedar Hill, I personally have been actively involved in 7 different ensembles. That fact alone is absolutely incredible. It's incredible that I and my classmates have been granted that opportunity, and through my musical extracurriculars have I developed a close community of friends that have supported me and cared for me in ways that only friends can. And I am sure that my peers share the

same experience. Many of them I am writing this letter on behalf of.
Trustees, many of us have younger siblings who will be attending middle school next year. My own brother has already decided he wants to play saxophone or percussion, and join choir as well as continue strings, just like his sister. To take that away from him and his peers, to extinguish their hopes and dreams, is cruel.
And think not only of the students, but the incredible and formidable teachers who work to make a difference in our lives every day. I won't say they work tirelessly. That's not true. They work day and night to make sure we are happy, healthy and learning as much as we can. They sanitize the chairs in the band room between classes, they work with the ever changing protocols, and that's a lot of work, but they do it for music.
Middle school music programs in particular are incredibly important as an introduction to the wonderful world of music.
So I ask you. I ask you all, if you truly care for the well-being of us, the students. Because if you did, you wouldn't be cutting not only a program, an environment, a community. But a family.
Yours in fellowship,
Gabrielle Campbell with
Kaelyn Manseau, Frog McAndrew, Cienna Vu, Camille Astridge, Meira Bradbury, Ada Butcher, Benson Hunt, Fergus Jessop, Dominic Ely, Makaio McKnight, Dane Elliot, Danika Peters, Finn Graves, Kate Myllyniemi, Kat Gillese, Keaton Anstice and Tobias Faerber

From: Gary Preston CFM 247
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd: Island Musicians Association opposes SD 61 cuts to music
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:59:10 PM

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I am forwarding to you a letter which I have sent to several people at SD 61.
The content of the letter is:

> As President of the Island Musicians and a member of the general public I am absolutely opposed to the proposal by SD 61 to cut funding to music programs in order to address budget issues. Music programs are NOT the problem; cutting music programs is NOT the solution.
> I am sure you have some awareness of the many many studies demonstrating how much of a positive effect learning music has on brain development in young people, and improves performance in so many other academic disciplines. You would be making a big mistake to ignore this and to also dismiss the benefits of music programs in developing social skills, self-confidence, and leadership.
> I understand that there is a budget problem, but diminishing any programs involving teacher-student connection is NOT the "easy fix", and should never even be a "last resort".
> I also understand that there has been, over the past few years, great growth in senior leadership positions NOT directly involving the actual teaching of children, and I suggest that's a place to look for where any cuts could come from. NOT from the people who work with kids and provide them with opportunities. Band is what keeps some people in school.
> Music programs are NOT the problem; cutting music programs is NOT the solution.

The proposed cuts will have a lasting negative effect on arts and culture in this area (and beyond).
Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Regards,
Gary Preston, President
Island Musician Association
Local 247, Canadian Federation of Musicians

Begin forwarded message:

From: Gary Preston CFM 247
Date: April 12, 2021 at 2:07:08 PM PDT
To: dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca
Subject: Fwd: Island Musicians Association opposes SD 61 cuts to music

Begin forwarded message:

From: Gary Preston CFM 247
Date: April 12, 2021 at 12:00:18 PM PDT
To: jwatters@sd61.bc.ca, dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca, nduncan@sd61.bc.ca, tferris@sd61.bc.ca, ahentze@sd61.bc.ca, eleonard@sd61.bc.ca, rpainter@sd61.bc.ca, rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca, awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca, sgreen@sd61.bc.ca, hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca
Cc:
Subject: Island Musicians Association opposes SD 61 cuts to music

As President of the Island Musicians and a member of the general public I am absolutely opposed to the proposal by SD 61 to cut funding to music programs in order to address budget issues. Music programs are NOT the problem; cutting music programs is NOT the solution.
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suggest that's a place to look for where any cuts could come from. NOT from the people who work with kids and provide them with opportunities. Band is what keeps some people in school.
Music programs are NOT the problem; cutting music programs is NOT the solution.

Gary Preston
President, CFM Local 247

From: Geri Lynne
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Colin Roberts
Subject: SAVE SD61 BAND, MUSIC, ARTS
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:06:05 AM
Attachments: SD61 board email - 2021.docx

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

Our names are Ryan and Geri-Lynne Slogotski and we are the parents of 3 current and past students of SD61. We are writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

We feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. It is a SCIENCE based fact. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community. It is a well-known fact that busy kids are kids who stay out of trouble.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

Where is the equality in cutbacks? Why are you not looking at the very top heavy district admin, international students, finance and HR positions, athletics, hockey academy, flight school etc.). There are 73 staff listed on the SD61 department directory. There must be many areas that could operate more efficiently and save on costs.

The community involvement in the arts (band, choir, strings, musical theatre, marching band, ukulele, drum line, art shows, showcases, dance ect.) at the school

level, exceeds any community involvement in sports. We've been to many a packed theatre and gym and seen the love our community has for the arts.

Music is not only extra-circular, but also career education. For example, our son is currently enrolled in a music program at UVIC along with 4 others from his graduating year alone.

Spectrum Community School has been without one of their theater teachers for 16 months. There has been lost classes and curriculum and for the first time in many years there is not a complete mainstage musical show. If this had been any other position (math, science, English, social studies, languages, etc.) this position would be replaced immediately. The effect on the students has been dramatic and left many of them struggling.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Ryan and Geri-Lynne Slogotski

From: Graeme Campbell
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Programming in 2021-2022 and Beyond
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:53:39 PM

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Hello,

My name is Graeme Campbell and I'm writing to urge you to reconsider and vote against the proposed cuts to the musical education programs in the Victoria School District.

Music education is vital to the well rounded development of all children and the exposure to these programs should be seen as just as critical as the exposure to mathematics or language education.

The impact that these cuts will have on what, for many students, is the best part of their day, is dramatic. The cuts will also have a detrimental effect on those students who don't yet know that they have a love of music, or will find "their people" within the music classroom.

I am confident that you can find an alternative way of dealing with the budget shortfall that doesn't involve such dramatic cuts.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Sincerely,

Graeme Campbell

From: H Jeeves
To: Trustees
Subject: 2021/2022 Budget comments
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:47:52 PM

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Greetings:

Can this note please be included in the board meeting agenda package? Thank you!

First off: Thank you for your efforts so far. I appreciate how difficult an exercise this is. I sincerely hope our community can reach an agreement here that truly supports kids through our schools.

The strategic plan (which I'm assuming is foundational to budget decisions) points to wanting to increase inclusion, indigenous learning, and have increased well being for all kids. Cutting funding to music goes against all of those points!

- Music provides an inclusive space for kids to discover who they are in community
- Music, song and dance are fundamental to **all** indigenous cultures
- Promotes mental health and wellbeing, self confidence, healthy understanding and expression of emotion
- Performance skills translate to life skills (working as a group, performing in public, etc.)
- Provides access to every culture on the planet (invaluable in a multicultural area like ours.)

... and provides a relatively level playing field for kids to participate in **when it's provided in the school setting**. (it shouldn't become something only wealthy kids have access to!)

It makes more sense to expand indigenous learning into music programs, by including singing and storytelling!

Why cut something that covers all of your plan points at the same time?
As part of the proposed budget, I did notice there is emphasis on keeping mental health supports in place (counsellors.) Which is great! Having less music programming will mean more kids needing that support. And I'm not really joking about that!

Thank you for your attention and best of luck with your decisions,

- Helena Jeeves

ref: strategic plan link: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2021/02/Presentation-EDCOW-Learning-Team-2021-02-01.pdf

From:	Hannah Fudge
To:	Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Trustees
Subject:	SD61 Music Program Budget Cuts
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 6:29:50 PM

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Hello,

My name is Hannah Fudge and I am a Grade 9 student at Victoria High School. I am an avid musician and have been for most of my life. I'm emailing you all regarding the recent proposition of a significant budget cut to our district's music program at the Elementary and Middle School levels. I feel it is my obligation as someone who owes so much to our music program to advocate against what could be a very damaging reality for the younger students in this school district.

I had my first interaction with school music in Grade 3, when I joined Island Ukuleles. Since then, music has been not only a passion for me, but what can only be described as a necessity. As I grew up and moved from Quadra Elementary to Lansdowne Middle School, I quickly joined the other aspects of music that had been limited or unavailable to me, band and strings. I took up the violin and bassoon, spending an average of 3-4 hours every day in music classes. I was searching for the same kind of family I'd found in Island Ukuleles, and I'm happy to say I've had a lot of luck.

I owe not just the knowledge of how to play a few instruments, but skills that have reached far beyond anything else I've learned at school. I have learned how to collaborate and create, how to uphold my own responsibilities, how to teach and be taught, but most importantly how to be the person I am and become the person I want to be. Music has become something that is tied to my identity, and I know I'm not alone in that. It has been one of the most prominent positive contributors to my mental health, and while it may not have had such a drastic effect on me, I can not argue with fact. I know far too many people who would no longer be with us without the support and love this music program has given them.

Where our teachers in academics lacked, our music teachers came out in full. They took the time to know us and understand us, to learn of our passions outside their classroom and value us as people instead of simply students.

I know what it feels like to lose this. I was lucky enough to get it back, so I'm not going to let it be taken away from others so easily. The fact that music has taken the biggest blow while sports remain untouched is extremely concerning, especially since sports are accessible outside of school while music doesn't have that same privilege. Music keeps the children in your care in school. It keeps them engaged and excited and creative, and if I were you I would take every chance at that I could get. School District 61's vision, to quote your own website, is that "each student within our world-class learning community has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations", and that is something that I as a student take very seriously.

I hope that you take the voices of the students in your district into account and make a decision that will not deprive so many children of such a valuable aspect of their education and their identity.

Thank you,

Hannah Fudge

From:	Heather Davies
To:	Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject:	School District #61 - Please don't deprive students of an education in music
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 12:49:28 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Heather Davies and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,
Heather

From: Heather McNally
To: Trustees
Subject: Elementary and Middle School programs are ESSENTIAL!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:04:09 AM

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Hello Trustees,

First, I would like to have my letter included in the Board Meeting Agenda package.

I am sure you have heard many stories of the positive impact that music has had on many, many students within the Greater Victoria School Board. I would like to add the story of my family.

Our eldest daughter has been designated gifted. Unfortunately the programming for gifted children is severely underfunded, and from what I understand going to be even further eroded. She is a very bright child, and finds school tedious and boring. On an normal day, she reads between 200 and 300 pages during class, while at the same time completing all assignments on time and at an exceeding expectations level. So how does she give herself a challenge? With limited time for the teachers to provide enrichment, the answer is MUSIC! She attends Cedar Hill, and last year was in 9 ensembles!! At the concert she was running from one side of the gym with one group, to the other with the next group and back again!! She has found friendships, which have been a struggle in the classroom, she has found challenge, she plays flute, piccolo, violin and sing, and she has found teamwork. MUSIC has been vital to her being engaged at school and in life.

As for the elementary strings program, both of my older children began playing violin in Grade 1 because they saw the Grade 5's play. The younger students look up to the older students and can't wait until it is their turn. We are fortunate to be able to provide our girls with lessons outside of school, but many families cannot, and the strings program is an excellent way to introduce the love of music to kids. When the students play in grade 5, they are familiar with how music class runs, they are familiar with the joy of playing as a group, the hard work of practicing and the pride (or maybe terror) of performing. When they enter middle school, they have this experience and many choose to be a part of the middle school program creating a strong and exceptionally talented group of children.

Please, consider other options for balancing the budget. Music is too fundamental to the well being of so many kids. I am also saddened by the loss of the gifted programs, but I understand something must be cut. Music is her gifted program.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Heather McNally

From:	Hilary Hallman
To:	Trustees; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject:	Regarding the upcoming vote on funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 12:46:35 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Hilary, and I am a parent of two children who attend South Park Family School. I am also a former School District 61 student who enjoyed public music education from Grade 5 through Grade 12. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote on funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

As other letter-writers have said already, the critical role music education plays in children's multi-faceted development cannot be overstated. I fear that this argument will fall on deaf ears because you have already decided it is not worthwhile. Therefore, I will implore you to consider the other aspects of music education that drive equality and inclusivity in our schools. You had spoken to the need for equality before when it came to closing schools of choice, so your move now to consider cutting music is entirely misaligned with your priorities. Public music education is critical for students from lower socioeconomic homes. Every child in our province deserves the chance to learn via music theory and creative spirit, and they should not be denied this opportunity based on financial capability. Furthermore, children of BIPOC families particularly deserve the right to their cultural expression and inclusion found within music.

I am speaking from a place of privilege in that my love and ability for music fostered in public school was furthered by private education. And my children are also privileged to take private lessons (at an annual cost of $3000). I recognize this is prohibitively expensive for many families in our district. It is your role to preserve equal opportunities for children - and access to music education is precisely that.

Additionally, I am outraged to see your proposed cut of $685,907 in Educational Assistant Staffing. Removing these integral support people from the most vulnerable children in our schools smacks of short-sightedness and lacks on-the-ground knowledge. At this critical time of heightened general anxieties and fears due to a pandemic, your choice to remove the very people who create safe, comfortable, inclusive learning environments in the classroom is beyond comprehension.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. I implore you to question why you can't continue your previous practice of carrying forward a surplus. Why is there such a need to change these accounting practices now? For the sake of our children's right to inclusive and equal education, reconsider.

Please include my letter in the board meeting agenda package.

Sincerely,
Hilary Hallman

From: drian
To: Trustees
Subject: music courses
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:09:04 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

--
Ian B Maclennan, PhD, FSA Scot
former Associate Professor, Theatre Arts (retired)
Thorneloe University at Laurentian

From: Argenta and Attrot
To: Trustees
Subject: PROPOSED CUTS to MUSIC PROGRAMS
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:33:52 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Yours sincerely,

Ingrid Attrot,

Head of Voice,

Victoria Conservatory of Music

From: Jacob Tam
To: Trustees
Subject: Do not defund music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:05:20 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. I must express my deepest disagreement for the following reasons.

To begin, I believe that it is egregious for a group of people to take away something that students immensely enjoy and appreciate. I assume that many of you on the board of trustees have children, who may even participate in these activities such as band, orchestra, etc. Due to the specificness of this important subject, I must express that I do not believe that I am not only speaking for myself, but for the school music community. As a former Lansdowne Music student myself, music has left a great impact on my life and continues to do so every day. I'm sure that you've participated in many group activities or worked with other students during your time in elementary, middle, or high school. I personally enjoy these activities, the same as I do for example in band class. I am able to work with my fellow peers and learn new concepts and skills and work towards achieving something that takes effort, determination, and self-confidence. As you probably know, these skills previously listed, are necessary to advance in life. Furthermore, music can not only be a "hobby" or a "leisure activity" but it can also be pursued as a career. How could you dispose of such a special opportunity for children of all ages?

Secondly, having musical activities in school can and is extremely beneficial to students who are in need of financial assistance and whose families can not afford to have private music lessons. Music is not just a "thing" but it is also a privilege to be able to work with great people and communities. If you exterminate the music programs throughout SD61 you will be taking away not only our students' ability to play music but the countless other skills that come along with it. Thousands of students participate in music classes every day, do you really want to take away that simple freedom?

Finally, music is a great way during the time of COVID to especially work on community building. During the lockdown, I especially felt quite socially inactive and I can assure you that many other people, both of young and of old ages felt the same way. It is most essential that we aim to strengthen these social bonds now more than ever and it is necessary that to continue this, we must keep music in our schools. Art is a necessary skill in society, but if we take away a class that so many students value and appreciate that also helps with developing skills such as teamwork and community building, what do you think the lasting effects will be? Certainly not something positive.

To conclude, you are completely disregarding our students' rights to participate in music. I hope that you will make the best decision, regardless of money, but for strengthening our young generation's future.

Please safeguard our children's accessibility to valuable music education by voting NO.

Yours truly,

Jacob Tam, Lansdowne Middle School Alumni, Current Grade 8 student at Glenlyon Norfolk School.

From: Jacquie Simpson
To: Trustees
Subject: Budgets cuts to school music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:23:49 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

We strongly support a holistic view of education for our youth. This includes the liberal arts programs. In order to develop our youth in a balanced manner, all aspects of their education must be respected and supported. Removing one segment of their eduction is tantamont to outright discrimination. As you are aware, there is a serious problem within Canadian institutions with systemic discrimination. We should not be adding to this problem.

We expect more of our elected officials. Please ensure that a balanced approach to all elements of our youth's education is supported.

Thank you for your attention to this matter of concern.

Yours sincerely

Lorne & Jacquie Simpson

From: Jane Reid
To: Trustees
Subject: Music program cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:54:21 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Trustees,

I fully respect you have a very challenging task trying to juggle where less money goes. But PLEASE SAY NO to cutting music programs.

Of all the things this pandemic has highlighted for us, mental health is high on the list, and often overlooked in children. Music, music lessons, focussing on listening, cooperation among musicians, sheer pleasure from music, teaching children their own ability to self-soothe- these are just a few benefits of music education.

Please find another way to save money. And please include my email in your correspondence at your next meeting.
Thank you for all you do.
Respectfully,
Rev. Jane Reid

From: Jane Whiteley
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to music programmes
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:07:21 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

I understand that S.D. 61 proposes to address a deficit problem in part by making significant cuts to existing music programmes.
I am not unsympathetic to the budgetary difficulties that school districts face, but I urge you to consider other alternatives. I am keenly aware of how important music programmes were to my own children and feel very strongly that such important instruction continue to be made available.
Please include my correspondence at the next Board meeting that deals with this issue.

Jane Whiteley

Sent from my iPad

From: Jane Woodland
To: Trustees
Subject: I would like my email letter in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:40:51 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

School District 61 and trustees;

All the best science on child development, brain development and social intelligence declares the crucial importance of music experience in young children's lives at school. Music education improves math skills. Music educations enhances focus and cooperation. And much more.

Please do no remove this precious human endeavour from our elementary and middle schools.

Ross and Jane Woodland

From: Jasmine Huang
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include this in your board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:41:04 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Hi,

I, as a patent of 3, vote NO! to the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school programs and help to maintain accessibility for all young people.

Thanks.

Jasmine

From: J B
To: Trustees
Subject: Music cuts again? I would like this email letter in correspondence at the board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:55:35 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

I am an amateur musician, a participant in musical activities which enrich my life. I would not have this richness in my life without meeting it in elementary school, and continuing throughout my schooling.

Music education is not an inessential. Children need to encounter, be involved with, and given the opportunity to extend themselves in music.

I could go on; I'm sure others have made the points better than I can.

Please reconsider this cut.

J C Beukema
View Royal

From: Jen D
To: Trustees; jwatters@2361.bc.ca; Diane Mcnally; nduncan@sd661.bc.ca; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Music and Inclusive Learning are Vital
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:54:27 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, Harold Caldwell, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District,

My name is Jen Pennock, and I am a former student of GVSD, a former Educational Assistant with GVSD and now a parent of 2 students at Cedar Hill Middle School. I am writing to you about the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

There are no words to describe the importance of both of these programs to the children in our district. Music is so important for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting the accessibility of these benefits and supports at any level in schools today is a step backwards not only for our children and children of future generations but for the community as a whole.

For so many students, music has become their way of coping with the extreme stress of living through a global pandemic as a young person. My daughter has not been within 6 feet of her friends in over a year, she has felt extremely overwhelmed at the severity of what is happening and the one thing she has been able to count on is her music. Without the years of band, strings and choir classes she's been fortunate enough to have, she wouldn't even have this. Her band class is the one class she can go, pandemic or not, and feel like she belongs. She looks forward to these classes more than anything else. There has been a dramatic increase in her self-confidence, her ability to express herself has improved and she has decided to follow in the footsteps of the incredible teachers and role models she has at Cedar Hill and wants to become a music teacher herself. Your decision to cut these programs changes her future.

My son has an IEP and without the inclusive learning program would not be where he is today. The inclusive learning teachers, and educational assistants not only support the students with IEPs but they are always there with open hearts to help any student in so many ways. There is absolutely no excuse for these children to not have access to the help they need.

The areas you have put forward for reduced funding will impact the district's most vulnerable

students, taking away opportunities to express themselves, make new connections, learn crucial skills and for some the only place they feel they belong.

Your proposed budget cuts will take incredible teachers, role models and a support system away from students who benefit greatly from their empathetic, encouraging, and enthusiastic approaches to education. Teachers and Educational Assistants enter these professions because they love what they do and want to help. They do this knowing how rocky and challenging that road can be.

I beg you to vote against these budget cuts. This impacts these incredible teachers, educational assistants, the current students, future students and the families of all. Please make the students the priority.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Jen Pennock

From: Jenn L
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:26:13 PM

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****** I would like to have my email below included in the board email agenda package. Please confirm receipt.***

To the members of the SD61 Board of Trustees;

I am writing with regard to the proposal of yet again atrocious funding cuts to middle school and elementary music programs and Inclusive programs.

I am not sure I understand why these programs are being chosen, again, for budget cuts. All I see are the kids in sports programs and such being ignored as they are seemingly "more important". Time and time again, deficit recovery picks on the Fine Arts sector, as well as the Inclusive programs.

I'd like to know how the Board plans to help Inclusive children when Learning Assistants are already scarce, and classes are getting bigger and bigger. The children who NEED extra attention in order to thrive are being forgotten about. Why is this necessary? The point of school is to help children attain the knowledge, both socially and intellectually, to succeed in life. You are preventing this from happening. I will never understand how taking away the quality of these programs are supposed to help them in the long term.

I also fail to recognize how you believe that music and the fine arts are needless. Why are the budget cuts consistently target these programs? I myself can confidently say that without music, I would not be where I am, nor would I be writing this letter to you. It is hard enough as it is being racially profiled, and now you're saying that the minority kids are going to have to "find something else" to put their focus on? What if they're not good at sports? People always find solace in music - not everyone finds comfort in sports. I was not good at sports and was teased mercilessly for it - but when I found the band program, it helped me get through schooling and I graduated, still in the program, with Honors.

Please advise me how you view this budget cut to these programs are unavoidable. I'd love to hear your thoughts on how creating harder spaces for children are compulsory and that we can just ignore the other programs that never get cut. Children use music as a means of escape and you're planning to just take it away from them, or make it even harder to create good quality programs to make a difference in their lives. Children rely on their learning assistants to better understand what is being taught.

I would appreciate if you listened to our concerns and rethought the proposed budget cut.

Sincerely,
Jennica Lam

Jennifer Olson

April 11, 2021

School District 61

Superintendents and Trustees

Dear Superintendents and Trustees,

It is unconscionable to consider cutting music programs for elementary and middle school students. These programs are the heart of our schools and are essential for the proper growth and development of our children. Music education inspires, brings joy, and is critical to our children's wellbeing.

2020 has been a difficult year for everyone and children are no exception. Many have felt isolated and disconnected from their community. Music is a positive outlet. It brings students together. It is restorative. Beyond being critical to mental health and teamwork, music also has a direct benefit to academic education, math and critical thinking. So many studies have been done to show the positive and essential benefits of music. Music is fundamental in every culture around the world. We cannot strip this from future generations. It is at the very core of who we are.

Many children will not have opportunities to pursue and experience music education outside of the public-school system. Waiting until high school is too late. Children can absorb so much when they are younger and are much more open to trying new instruments and new experiences. Children need a comprehensive music foundation as young as possible. Music is

not a frivolous extracurricular activity that is merely "fun" for kids. This is a **fundamental** part of childhood development and should be reflected as such in your budget.

Let's not put our children at a disadvantage in Victoria. They deserve better. The music program must be adequately funded.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Olson
(campus view parent)

From:	Jill Appleton
To:	Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Ryan Painter
Subject:	SD 61 Music
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 1:59:59 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Jill Appleton, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Jill Appleton

From: Jill
To: Trustees
Subject: Music cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:19:48 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please do not cut funding to school music programs. Elementary and middle school music education is vital to child development and essential for community vibrancy.

We already went through this 20 years ago. Let's not scapegoat the arts again.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Thank you.

From: Joan McGorman
To: Trustees
Subject: School Music Programs are Essential!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:34:51 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

We have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

School Music programs are extremely important for all children! Music enhances learning in all subjects including math, science and literature.

Please ensure that music programs in public schools continue without any cuts in funding or teaching.

Thank you.

Robert and Joan McGorman

From: Joan Riecken
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to the district music program
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:17:18 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO. It would be an irreparable loss were these music programs to be cut.

Yours

Joan and Kaye Edward Riecken

Sent from my iPhone

From: jcdalisay
To: Trustees
Subject: BOARD MEETING RE. MUSIC PROGRAM CUTS
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:26:27 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To the SD 61 Trustees:

Please include my remarks in the Board meeting agenda package.

I moved to Victoria in 1995 when I was accepted into grad school for piano performance. I decided to stay here because it would be a beautiful place to raise a family.

My daughters have both had the opportunity to take strings in 5th grade and oboe through middle school. My husband and I were both thankful to be part of a district that offered these programs.

The proposed cuts to the music programs is shocking to me. I have many private piano students who have thrived in school because of band, choir, and strings. These are talented, creative, and sensitive kids who have found their passion and tribes through these activities. I am not exaggerating when I say that many young people will lose their confidence and sense of worth and will feel less motivated to attend school without these programs.

I think most educated people are aware of all the scientific "good for the brain" reasons why young people should study music. But more important are all the "good for the soul" reasons. Young people who are able to express themselves and find comradeship in the act of creating art together are what we need for a brighter future.

Please reconsider these cuts.

Sincerely,

Jo Ann C. Dalisay B.Mus., M.Mus.
Registered Music Teacher
Studio Director, Celesta Piano Studio

Sent from my Galaxy

From: Joanne Gemmill
To: Trustees; Harold Caldwell; Deb Whitten; Shelley Green
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts to Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:47:49 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

My name is Joanne Gemmill and I am a parent in Victoria. I have two kids at Oak Bay High who have participated in elementary school strings at Margaret Jenkins, middle school strings, concert band, jazz band and choir at Monterey and high school band, jazz band, choir and musical theatre at Oak Bay High. I have been on the executive of both the Monterey and Oak Bay High Band Parent Associations. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming proposal to cut funding to the majority of the elementary and middle school music programs in the district.

The benefits of music in schools are well known and if the various social media platforms I am on are any indication, you have been well informed of these benefits over the past few days. I will not spend time regurgitating this information. What I will spend time telling you about was how exciting and emotional it was to see my daughter sit in UVic's McKinnon Gym when she was in grade 5, surrounded by district strings students in grades 5 through 12, play Pachebel's Canon together. It still brings tears to my eyes because of what it represented: a bunch of kids of different ages, backgrounds, schools and abilities but all playing one song. I will spend time telling you about my daughter's grade 9 band trip to the Whistler Music Festival, where they had to be up at 6am packing their lunches so that they could spend all day watching, critiquing and performing. She had the time of her life. I will spend time telling you that, as you are aware, school is a pretty stressful place to be right now but when my daughter has band, she gets home and says how great band is, how great Nathan Jacklin and Jeff Weaver make the class, how fun it is and how great she feels to be part of it. There are many kids in senior band that she first met in grade 6. I can tell you how much fun she had in marching band two years ago when they marched in the Oak Bay Tea Party and how, even wearing black pants, a black shirt and a hot green polyester blazer, it was one of her most memorable experiences of high school so far.

Starting with strings in grade 5 makes it easier to join strings in middle school because you know a few people in the group and you know a bit about how to play your instrument. Then the strings teacher talks about how great band is so kids join band because it is also somewhat familiar. Then kids get a few years older and then can join jazz band. Then in high school, they continue to play in the bands or strings because their friends are there and the teachers seem cool and it is a place where things are familiar and friendly. I fear if the elementary and middle school programs are cut, the high school band program will wither and die. Joining a new group with a bunch of kids they don't know and possibly embarrassing themselves a bit along the

way is generally not what a grade 9 student is looking to do.

Music gives kids hope, self-esteem, a sense of belonging, purpose, and teaches them team work, perseverance, responsibility, organization and cooperation. It has such a huge effect on our students' socio-emotional state and contributes in so many positive ways to our school communities.

The recent SD61 survey put together by Lisa McPhail states "The student experience is at the heart of all we do in SD61". Cutting music programs in the midst of a pandemic demonstrates that this statement is far from the truth.

Please vote against this proposed budget cut.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Joanne Gemmill

April 12, 2021

Dear Superintendent Green, Associate Superintendent Caldwell and SD61 Trustees,

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

This is my ninth year as the music specialist at Campus View Elementary and prior to that, I taught music for eight years at Quadra Elementary. I have a deep love of music and enthusiastically share that passion with my students each and every day. Throughout my seventeen years teaching music in this district, I have witnessed what words cannot even describe. Music education touches students in countless ways which are even too profound for me to fully understand. I am proud to be teaching in the Greater Victoria School District as music is so incredibly strong and we have astonishing parent and community support. This is not something that happened overnight; it has taken years and years to build.

Long after students leave my elementary music program, I receive messages conveying what an impact school music classes have had in their lives. A large portion of my music students feed into the Arbutus Music Program. Our family of music teachers work together to create a smooth transition from elementary to middle to high school music. If my students do not have a middle school program to move onto in Grade 6, that momentum will be lost and high school music programs will also suffer. Over the past few years, our district has become well-known for our many wins in the national CBC Music Challenge. The SD61 music program is extremely strong and is envied all across Canada!

Covid has made life so challenging and for me personally music has been the one thing that allows me to put aside all anxiety and be present in the moment. It's an outlet that I need as an adult which I know so many children require as well. We have so few opportunities these days to work together and create something as raw and emotional as music - something that truly comes from the heart and soul. News of these proposed cuts spread to my elementary students and they came to music class today worried and upset. It's absolutely devastating to them to imagine a school life without music. Music is how so many students identify and express themselves. Without it, they will be lost.

I implore you to consider how essential these music programs are to the mental well-being and social/emotional development of our students. Music helps them succeed in all areas of school and life. It is imperative that we uphold our district's music programs. We simply cannot lose them.

Children need music!

Sincerely,

J Onuma

Jody Onuma

From: jody pilling
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed $1.5m budget cuts to music programs in 2021-2022
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:17:08 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Superintendent and Trustees of School District 61:
I am writing to express dismay at SD61's proposed $1.5m budget cuts to music programs in 2021-2022. Arts contribute to complete education, and music is fundamental to a school curriculum. Cutting music education denies students exposure to a discipline that will benefit them at every stage of their lives. These cuts will negatively affect the creativity of our next generation's leaders.
The importance of music education in a child's development cannot be underestimated. Music in schools encourages cultural awareness, fosters social relations through common pursuits, and offers a forum for pride in personal accomplishment. There is a substantial body of research which confirms that music education raises overall student academic achievement.
Please reconsider and remove these budget cuts affecting middle school bands, strings and choir, and elementary strings.
Please include my letter in correspondence at your next sd61 Board meeting.
Sincerely,
Jody Pilling, B.Ed., M.A., C.Psychol.(UK), Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society.
President, Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival Association.

From: Joe Blake
To: Trustees
Subject: proposed cuts to music prgramso
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:05:08 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned SD 61 is proposing to make major cuts to elementary and middle school music programs. I wrote about Victoria's music scene in the Times Colonist for over two decades before my retirement seven years ago. I witnessed first hand all of those years the importance of music programs in schools on our then-vibrant arts and cultural scene. Post-pandemic these programs will be even more important for our children and for our culture. I've witnessed even more powerful examples of the power of music education while visiting cities like New Orleans and San Miguel de Allende. We should be following their example by supporting music education, not cutting school music program spending. Find smarter ways to budget. Support music education in our schools. Increase, don't decrease funding. Vote no to any proposal to cut music education.

Sno'uyutth! Joseph Blake

From: John Sampson
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to Victoria music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:31:16 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

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please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting

To the Superintendent and Trustees

Please do not approve this proposal. I question a) why the district is permitted to be in a large deficit position, and b) what fiscal contribution to this deficit would be achieved by chopping music contracts and programs.

There must be other ways to handle this financing without penalizing elementary and middle school music students. Music exposure at that age is a fundamental stage to enable appreciation and skills to be carried forward into adult life, as well as providing a key dimension in students' lives, in what has been a challenging year for them to say the least.

Please don't make this worse.

thank you
John Sampson
Victoria, BC.

From: Josie Terlesky
To: Trustees
Subject: Budget Cuts to Music Program
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:30:44 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Board of Trustees,
I am writing to express my serious concern regarding budget cuts to the Music Programs in our schools.
As a parent of a grade 12 high school student who's desire to continue her post secondary studies to become a music teacher is due in part to the strong foundation that was built through inspiring, dedicated and devoted music teachers throughout her middle school years and high school currently. I have personally witnessed the positive impact music education has had in her life by contributing to her emotional well being, building self confidence, providing an avenue for creative artistic expression and the desire to share that with others in a significant way by pursuing teaching. Music Education bring students together no matter what their background or experience and our teachers support them into turning their instruments and talents into something beautiful and amazing to be shared. One does not have to be athletic or a certain build to join, there are no prerequisites or criteria to participate. Having music education in the schools allows this opportunity to be available to everyone without prejudice.
Music in itself has proven to increase positive endorphins in the body, improve mental health and wellness and provide a positive outlet for students to express themselves. I believe the cost of keeping the music program in the schools is a small price to pay for how widely it would impact the number of students that would benefit from it.
Thank you for your consideration.
Please include in the board meeting agenda package.
Josie Terlesky

From: JOY ANDREWS
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to musical education
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:58:54 PM

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Please include in the correspondence at the next Board meeting.
Dear Trustees and Superintendants,
I am deeply concerned to learn of the plan to cut children's musical education. I am dead against this as a solution to economic challenges.

As a proposed solution, please look at administrative positions and resources as a source of savings before cutting such critical education as the musical education of our children. Many of our bureaucratic organizations put far more funding than needed into management, communications and related resources than necessary. Cut here before taking away such critical learning as music.

Sincerely,

Joy Andrews.
Victoria, BC

Sent from my iPhone

From: Joyce van de Vegte
To: Trustees
Cc: Jeff Weaver
Subject: support for music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:50:08 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in the agenda for your upcoming meeting if possible.

Esteemed superintendent and trustees,

I was most distressed to learn that cuts to school music program are being considered. My daughter's music teachers at the elementary, middle, and secondary school levels – Gail Evans, Denver Rawson, Brian Anderson, Jeff Weaver, Nathan Jacklin, and Tina Horwood – are among the most dynamic and dedicated educators that she has had the pleasure to work with. All of them do much, much more than their jobs require to deliver platinum-class music education to vast numbers of students, including before- and after-school practices, lunchtime rehearsals, evening concerts, and music competitions and trips.

Music is one of the coagulating forces that converts students moving on from elementary school into confident, engaged members of a school's student body. These effects are evident in the popularity of the band, strings, and choir programs at Lansdowne Middle School and at Oak Bay Secondary School. Teachers and administrators alike recognize that investment in the music program translates into stronger positive connections between students and all of their academic undertakings.

My daughter is now in grade 10. She prospered at Lansdowne Middle School, and the school's music program in large part came to define her school experience. When she began, she was a kid who took piano once a week. Leaving grade 8, she saw herself as a musician, playing viola in strings and orchestra, playing oboe in band, and singing in multiple choirs. That excellent experience has continued at Oak Bay Secondary School, where my daughter was fortunate enough to be received by a truly superlative music program, headed by world-class music educators.

Honestly, I am full of gratitude that my daughter's education has been so enriched by music at her elementary, middle, and high schools. She is a better student but also a better person because of this, taking into her young adulthood a joy of music that will serve her always.

Please continue funding for music programs in SD61 schools so that the opportunities my daughter enjoyed will continue to be accessible to those that follow her.

Most sincerely,

Joyce van de Vegte

Music Parent

From: Judith Hunt
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence for Tuesday, April 13 Board Meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:08:10 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Superintendent Green and Board Members,

I am writing you regarding the proposed cuts to the SD 61 music programs. I believe that these cuts would have far-reaching negative effects on the children of School District 61.

Playing and learning music is part of what it means to be human. Being able to participate in musical endeavours is, for some children, what keeps them going in their lives. It is the most joyous part of their education, and one that grounds them, comforts them, and leads them to strive to learn. Although I believe that it is crucial for all children to have the opportunity to learn music, for many, it is the activity which energizes them the most and may be the only area in which they truly excel.

I know adults who have told me that the only reason they made it through school was their music program. I also know children who tell me that choir and band are the best part of their day or their week, since it is where they can come together with others and put aside their differences and enjoy creating beauty. I have met young adults in the post-secondary music program at the Conservatory who are fired up with their love of music, precisely because they were able to learn and be encouraged to nurture this part of themselves while in school.

Teaching students so that they can become mature adults who can think critically, evaluate, and stand up for what's right in society is a part of education that we hold dear and never would do away with. Why would we decide that teaching students to create, find joy, co-operate and harmonize through music is any less important?

I urge you to keep the music programs in the schools for our children's sake, and also for our own.

Sincerely,

Judith Hunt

Judith Hunt
Instructor
ELD Department
Camosun College
Victoria, BC

From: Julia Grav
To: Trustees
Subject: Letter to be included in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:53:18 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear sd61 board of trustees,

Please vote no against cutting music programs in the sd61. I have three children and they all live in sd61, one attends Vic West elementary and another will start there in the fall, the third is just 18 months. They all need opportunity to explore music in their schooling to work with their peers on songs and practice learning instruments.

Furthermore, I have donated to the Victoria Conservatory of Music over the years to help them support of music programming in school.

I grew up and went to school in sd61 and had fabulous experiences in my music classes learning music theory, violin and the clarinet. Without the opportunity provided by my school I would never have had the chance to learn music and value it as I now do.

Please vote no to defunding our music programs.

Sincerely,
Julia Grav

From: Jewels
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd:
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:41:04 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Julie Ross I am a past president of Island Ukuleles, mother of 3, grandmother of 5 and very concerned about the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in

this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully

Julie Ross

From: Kaeden Penty
To: Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Trustees
Subject: Music in Schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:42:41 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Kaeden Penty, and I am a former student of SD62 (graduated 2011). I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

By cutting funding and access to the arts you are potentially putting lives at risk. For many students, a creative musical class or extracurricular activity is the only reason they have to get out of bed to go to school. I probably would have killed myself in high school if I did not have choir. That community of music was one of only reasons I survived to graduate. I made lifelong friends and connections that are a large part of my life to this day.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-

wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Kaeden Penty

From: Karen Edwards
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to music education
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:39:10 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

As a former student in School District 61 involved in what was then an extracurricular band program I can attest to the lifelong learning benefits of music education . I would particularly like to emphasize the importance of the egalitarian aspect of providing access to music education and experience to students in public schools.

As a parent of four now adult children who benefitted from the strings and band programs and the exposure to symphony and opera productions throughout their thirteen years in district 61, I can again attest to the lifelong value of music education provided in our public schools.

As a former teacher, for four decades, in District 61 I can attest to the value for individual students, and for the culture of the whole school, of the music programs and performances provided in this District for at least the past seventy years.

Finally, as a subscriber to the Victoria Symphony, I ask you to reconsider the impact of discarding the long-standing and invaluable partnership between District 61 and the Symphony.

The survival of our music program has been threatened in the past and ways have been found to maintain it. Despite the present challenges please find a way to preserve music education for District 61 students of today and of the future.

Thank you for hearing me out,

Karen Edwards

Sent from my iPhone

From: Katelyn MacKellen
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Keep music in schools!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:35:35 AM

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To whom it may concern:

I was absolutely appalled when I heard that music programs were on the chopping block for the latest budget meeting. Music has countless benefits for children, including improvements to their brain development. Children with psychiatric conditions often find refuge and safety in artistic fields such as music. Not every child is into sports, math, or science; some children are into music! And we should encourage that. Stop treating the Arts as an unwanted guest that only gets to come to the table when there is space and money to feed them. The Arts should be fully embraced by our school districts and recognized for the value that it provides, not just to our children, but to our communities, and society as a whole.

Please include this email in your Board meeting agenda package.

Regards,
Katelyn MacKellen

From: Keith Finnie
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence for the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:19:14 PM

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To all trustees and the Superintendent:

I urge you all to vote against the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school programs. Please maintain accessibility for all young people.

Please

Regards,

Keith Finnie

From: Kelly and Jeff McLaren
To: Kelly and Jeff McLaren
Cc: Shelley Green; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Ann Whiteaker; Sam Whitten; hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca; Trustees
Subject: Music programmes in SD61
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:02:35 PM

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Dear members of the SD61 school board,

My name is Kelly McLaren and I am a parent of a high school student in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

My son has received a wonderful musical education with strings (cello) at Margaret Jenkins Elementary, playing oboe and tenor sax for all three years at Central Middle School, and playing oboe in his first year at Oak Bay High. My own experience with musical education consists of playing the flute in the school band from grade 6 through to graduation in grade 12. I can honestly say that it was the most meaningful part of my education.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Kelly McLaren

From: Kenna Miskelly
To: Trustees; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Don"t cut school music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:06:31 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Kenna Miskelly, and I am a parent of 3 children within School District 61 in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

My oldest child is entering Grade 12 next year and most of his favourite memories have centered around the school music programs he has been involved in over the past six years. He started in Grade 6 in Middle School and developed a real passion for music. In High School, he now plays in four different school bands. Music and band have been extremely important in supporting the mental health of our teenage students during the pandemic.

My younger children in elementary school have been waiting for their turn to take band. My daughter was not able to start strings this year because of the pandemic restrictions and this has been hard for her. We keep telling her that hopefully she will be able to take strings next year when pandemic restrictions are hopefully eased. It would be terrible to tell her that this important and long waited for program was cancelled.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community. With the ongoing emphasis on the importance of youth mental health, this would be a huge loss of opportunity to support student self-confidence, self-esteem, and pride in accomplishment.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools. Music and band support student mental health and provide learning and mentorship that is not found in other areas of the curriculum.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle

Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,
Kenna Miskelly

Board of Trustees - trustees@sd61.bc.ca
Jordan Watters - jwatters@sd61.bc.ca
Diane McNally - dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca
Nicole Duncan - nduncan@sd61.bc.ca
Tom Ferris - tferris@sd61.bc.ca
Angie Hentze - ahentze@sd61.bc.ca
Elaine Leonard - eleonard@sd61.bc.ca
Ryan Painter - rpainter@sd61.bc.ca
Rob Paynter - rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca
Ann Whiteaker - awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca
Superintendent of Schools: Shelley Green - sgreen@sd61.bc.ca
Deputy Superintendent of Schools: Deb Whitten - dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca
Associate Superintendent: Harold Caldwell - hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca

From: Kiiri Michelsen
To: Trustees
Subject: SD 61 proposed music program cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:01:46 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD 61 trustees,

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Having recently been made aware of the proposed significant cuts to music programs for elementary and middle school students, I am compelled to write and voice my deep concern about this proposed course of action. As a music performer, teacher, researcher, and writer, I can attest to the fact that learning about music-making and music-listening have an undeniably positive and crucial impact on the lives of students of all ages. The younger students are when they begin their musical experiences, the more likely they are to reap the life-long benefits of being 'music literate' and of having music in their lives.

Music programs are not just a frill, a 'fun extra', or a part of school that is less important, dispensible, and therefore easy to reduce or eliminate without serious consequences to students. If budget adjustments need to be made, there should be small changes made across disciplines to minimize the negative impacts on any given area of study.

Aside from the obvious positive effects of music learning and sharing on students - easily assessed by attending student musical events, speaking to students and teachers, and witnessing the joy, pride, and excitement present - in this day and age there is also mounting scientific evidence of the importance of music studies and music sharing to the development of brain function and its positive effects on learning abilities *across disciplines*. Add to this its importance to social development and its role in the maintenance of mental health, and it becomes reasonable to conclude that school music programs should receive more support, not less.

Simply put, learning about music is not just about music.

Surely we want to give our children and students the best tools we can while they are young, impressionable, and developing as human beings on their way to adulthood. If so, it then seems obvious that one of our educational system's top priorities should be to support, maintain, and even increase access to music-learning experiences, which teach students manifold skills (both consciously and unconsciously) in an environment of community, connection, personal expression and achievement, and joy.

If music programs for the youngest students are reduced or cut, music programs for older students will suffer from fewer participants, lower levels of student playing ability, and music 'illiteracy'. If senior music programs suffer these losses, there will be fewer students overall experiencing the benefits of music study. The negative effects of this will stretch well beyond

the confines of 'school life' and the school-age years and into society in general, where there will be fewer adults playing music, writing music, and interested in music.

Finally, consider for a moment how much music there is in all of our daily lives. Music is everywhere. It reaches into all spheres of society. It is the great equalizer - everyone and anyone can enjoy music.

However, if there is no-one to create the music, no-one to play the music: there is no music.

Please do not cut these programs.

Yours sincerely,

Kiiri Michelsen

Kiiri Michelsen B.Mus. M.Mus.

Mezzo-soprano
Voice Instructor
Diction Instructor/Coach

Victoria Conservatory of Music/Camosun College
Canadian College of Performing Arts

From: Kirsten Davis
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed music program cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:07:59 PM

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Hello,

This is to state that I would like the message below to be included in the Board Meeting Agenda package for Tuesday, April 13.

Thank you,

Kirsten Davis, MA, MTA
Certified Music Therapist

Begin forwarded message:

From: Kirsten Davis
Date: April 12, 2021 at 9:35:28 AM PDT
To:
Cc:
Subject: Proposed music program cuts

Dear Superintendents and Trustees of School District 61,

The proposed cuts to elementary and middle school SD61 Music Programs are unacceptable, and extremely concerning. As a parent of children at Marigold Elementary and Shoreline Middle schools, I have witnessed the strongly positive impact that these schools' outstanding strings, ukulele, band, and choir programs and teachers have had for my daughters. Our family is fortunate

to be able to provide music lessons as an extracurricular activity, but many families are not able to afford this luxury. Elementary and middle school music programs give vital opportunities to students whose families may not be able to afford private music lessons.

In the words of my daughters, "Learning music is easier when you're younger. If you wait until high school a lot of people will find it harder to learn." Both of them describe the importance of music classes as a way to balance modes of learning: a break from didactic learning, as well as an essential alternative to sports, in which not all kids have interest or aptitude. My daughters describe the benefit of music classes as a way to build school community, connecting them with students in differing grades or cohorts, with whom they wouldn't otherwise interact. Both of them highlight the benefits of learning to deal with performance anxiety through music: a skill which extends far beyond performing in concerts, through to professional presentations as a working adult. Facing these proposed cuts, my daughters are already demoralized, and if these cuts are realized, my daughters will have far less interest, motivation, and enthusiasm for the other aspects of their schooling.

Furthermore, as a music therapist with 25 years' clinical experience, using music as a tool for development and growth for clients with special needs, I am even more convinced of the unique benefits of music for cognition, socialization, and self-expression. Cutting music elementary and middle school music programs will take away opportunities for students to discover and strengthen aptitudes and abilities, confidence, presentation skills, fine motor skills, listening skills, applied math, and language learning. Research has shown that the benefits of music

education on bilateral hemispheric engagement, and therefore development, is unparalleled. Music classes provide opportunities to teach history, culture and language through a stimulating modality. However, one of the strongest needs met by music involvement is one which exists for all students, regardless of their academic potential or ability: the need for non-verbal self-expression. Music allows students to channel anger, stress, and anxiety in a constructive, calming way which is essential, particularly during this pandemic. Music has direct effect on physiological and psychological health: improved mood, increased attention span, and improved respiratory function to name but a few.

I urge you to find alternative solutions to the current budget shortfall. Music programs are essential and must not be sacrificed.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Davis, MA, MTA

Certified Music Therapist

Kirsten M. Scoffield

April 12, 2021

Attention: Trustees@sd61.bc.ca

Re: In support of Art in public education
Proposed music program cuts in SD61 schools

I deeply disagree with proposed cuts to school music programs. I believe the music and the arts have a significant role in our communities and public education, for their intrinsic value and for the ways in which they can enhance academic achievement and improve students' social and emotional development. The arts has value far beyond the enjoyment they bring to an audience or viewer. I am writing to you in support of retaining and supporting public education music programs.

Perhaps more than any other subject, music and the arts help students to understand themselves and others. The arts including, music, drama, creative writing, poetry, prose, dance, painting, sculpting etc., allow us to explore new worlds and to view life from another perspective, developing an acceptance strength and diversity." In addition, they "encourage individuals to sharpen their skills and abilities and to nurture their imagination and intellect."

A comprehensive music education may encompass such areas as the history of arts and culture, the honing of critical analysis skills, the re-creation of classic as well as contemporary works of art, and the expression of students' ideas and feelings through the creation of their own works of art. All students should be provided the opportunity to learn, perform, create and respond to art as part of their public education. Arts programs throughout a child's life stimulate a students' artistic interests and fosters growth and integration into all parts of our lives and cultural partners in the community ~ non-profit, cultural-arts organizations, arts centers, symphonies, festivals, theatres, etc.~ can offer engaging venues as well as skilled instructors and mentors for students.

There is a value-added benefits of the music and the arts in education. Research into the arts in education consistently show that arts teaching and learning can increase students' cognitive and social development. Connections between arts learning and achievement in reading and in math show us that the arts can be a critical link for students in developing the crucial thinking skills and motivations they need to achieve at higher levels of academic achievement.

In addition, students who are highly involved in music and arts instruction earn better grades and performed better on standardized tests. They also were more active in community pursuits including; community service, they watched fewer hours of television, reported less boredom in school, and were less likely to drop out of school. These findings apply to students across the board from the lowest socioeconomic status to those students with more support and higher socio economic status, belying the assumption that socioeconomic status, rather than music and arts engagement, contributes to strong gains in academic achievement and social involvement.

Exposure to music arts training imparts knowledge and skills that help students succeed in school and in life and is an important part of a complete education. As we work together to develop the best strategic measures for better education for our students, let's ensure that all children have access to the music and arts education programs in schools and the opportunity to learn and to grow to achieve each student's highest potential.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Scoffield
Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival, Board Member

**Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Trustee Board meeting.*

From: Laine Smoley
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep music in schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:06:04 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Hello All.

I am a parent of two - soon to be three- children in School District 61. I am saddened and appalled by the thought of loosing music access and education for kids at any level of schooling within our district. I have read the thousands of letters and comments on social media regarding this issue, most folks put it into more eloquent wording than I am capable of. But in our households' opinion it comes down to this: Music education is essential, not an extra-curricular activity to add a "break" to day, or give teachers a prep period.

My daughter has had the opportunity to participate in the Island Ukuleles program. An amazingly diverse, inclusive, and accessible program for all involved. My daughter started as a "Little Uker" in kindergarten, the past four years she has become an amazing little player, is part of something "bigger than her", has learned to be dedicated, accountable, and a good team player- all through her participation in Island Ukuleles - tied to the Oak Bay Ukulele program that is in talks of being axed. I know you're thinking "Wow! She got this all from a music program at the young age of 8?!?!" Yes! Pretty amazing right? This program is run on a volunteer basis by extremely dedicated teachers, parents, and let's not forget amazingly talented high school students from Oak Bay High. I fear eliminating the program at Oak Bay would endanger the future of Island Ukuleles and the extremely affordable and valuable service they offer our SD 61 community. It costs roughly $100 per year to be a part of IU, which operates on a weekly basis- If you do some quick math, those are VERY affordable music lessons. If that is unattainable, the group will waive the cost, AND they will even give your child a Ukulele to learn on if you are in need. The teachers are incredibly dedicated, as are the high school students who teach. My daughter looks up to these kids, and they are held in a very high regard in the community, setting an example to younger kids in the program, showing perseverance, helping others, teaching their peers through experience, and giving back to society, I could go on and on. Aren't these sounding like the type of young people we want representing and being produced within our school district? I hope you would all answer "YES!". I know I will encourage my daughter to follow in the foot steps of these outstanding students involved in this program.

I have only touched on the program at Oak Bay, but all that are "on the chopping block" are equally important for the same, and many other reasons... ones that have been outlined in the hundreds of letters of protest you have received. These music programs in school that are endangered will give kids a purpose they might not have found otherwise. Not all kids are athletes or academics, we need to hold music and arts to the same standard and regard as math, science, and physical education. Because, at the end of the day, it's all ESSENTIAL. Being exposed to a variety of topics while our children are learning are necessary for proper growth and successful development. After a tough year and a half our kids deserve to keep their

access to music education in schools.

I would like this letter included in the board meeting agenda package.

Also, your "survey" system needs a serious overhaul, tired of "rating" comments, you can do better on your end collecting feedback.

Thank you for your time.

Laine Smoley
Parent

From: Lani Caldwell
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:10:21 PM

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I have just been made aware that the Board of School Trustees for SD 61 are contemplating cuts to the music programs in Victoria schools. As a Victoria resident and taxpayer and a retired teacher, I wish to add my voice in protest to any proposed cuts to the music programs. Having had three daughters who benefitted from being involved in various band and music programs throughout their school careers, I know that music education has been shown to enhance academic performance. I now have grandchildren in the Victoria school system and my desire is that they have the same educational experience that their mother and aunts had.

I am and have always been a strong proponent of Multiple Intelligences, of which Musical ability is one, and I would hate to see students with this strength losing out because this option was not offered to them to demonstrate their abilities. There is more to education than linguistic and mathematical focus and as a retired Special Education teacher I have been witness to this a myriad of times. We need to be reaching ALL our students in both their areas of strength and in their learning styles.

Further, if you are planning on cutting the elementary school music programs, how are you planning on covering teacher prep time at the elementary level?

Please include my correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Lani Caldwell

Sent from my iPhone

L.M.S.S. Music Program Petition

Landsdowne Middle School South Students asking for no more cuts to music education.

1. Aislyn
2. Ellen
3. Brigitte Reters
4. Enid
5. Sloane
6. Callum
7. Brynna
8. Ana C.
9. Grace Bateman
10. Parker McLellan Standeven
11. Kyla Kunze
12. Griffin Parker
13. Claire Costigan
14. Jaden
15. Judy Desmond
16. Cooper Cathcop
17. Amira
18. Qasim
19. Sebastian
20. Elijah M
21. Jiaxin F
22. Everett
23. Georgia F
24. Gabby
25. Ella
26. Chanel
27. Sasha
28. Lily
29. Annette
30. Lucy
31. Lola
32. Jarquelinc
33. Astrid
34. Theodora Stanki
35. Amanda
36. Margot
37. Ms. Abbott
38. Ms. Akenda
39. Kyle
40. R. Chaytors
41. Mathilde H-C
42. Jill Hadley
43. Oliver Smitsdorff
44. Vanessa Walters
45. Vivian

46. Arshin
47. Angelina
48. Salina
49. Elysse
50. Amelia
51. Sam
52. Hayul
53. Noah
54. Dimitrios
55. Rose H.
56. Molly
57. Neka
58. Brandon
59. Ruby
60. Angels.
61. Lachlan
62. Ari
63. Mme Nessim
64. Ms. Morrison
65. Parker
66 Lucy
67 Tom
68 Zoe
69 Kota
70 Awab
71 August
72 Eric
73 Vishu
74 Jerald
75 Jayden
76 Ivan
77 Annika
78 Vienna
79 Matt
80 Dom
81 Anthony
82 Grayson
83 Audrey
84 Youssouf
85 Mich
86 Liam
87 Jo Anne Anderson
88 Sierra Thomy
89 Chelsea Mason
90 Lyra g.
91 Gareth Gaudin
92 Linden Gaudin

From: Laura Davis
To: Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Trustees
Cc: Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell
Subject: proposed budget cuts to fine arts programs in School District 61
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:48:14 PM

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Dear SD61 Board of Trustees,

I was devastated to hear of the huge proposed budget cuts to the fine arts programs in School District 61.

Participating in as many band, choir, and musical theatre programs as I could possibly squeeze into my schedule during my time at Cedar Hill middle school and Reynolds secondary school helped appease the anxiety that I (like so many children and teens) felt in those transitional phases, and my participation in those programs consistently made me excited to get up in the morning and go to school. These programs brought joy to my day-to-day school experience and helped me forge close relationships with classmates who remain some of my closest friends today. As a child with a developmental coordination disorder, it was also very beneficial for me have fun and creative opportunities to work on my motor skills through music, in a community-minded environment which felt safe and welcoming.

Music programs in schools instill an important sense of community, fuel well-being, and help children and teens learn more effectively in their other classes. It is important to provide access to these opportunities in elementary schools and middle schools, rather than just in high schools, as it is easier to develop musical skills at a young age. Further, instilling a love of music in young children encourages them to seek out these opportunities when they get to middle school, and then high school, and is beneficial to their development.

Despite struggling with anxiety since I began middle school, I excelled academically in high school and in university afterwards and am currently completing my training to become a lawyer. I sincerely believe that my access to a wide variety of fine arts programs in middle school and high school played a large role in my academic success and well-being during those stages, and my participation in the Reynolds Alumni Band and community choirs continues to be key to my happiness and well-being today.

Fine arts programs in our schools need to be maintained and prioritized, rather than cut. I believe that the proposed budget cuts to SD61 fine arts programs would be highly detrimental

to the children of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration. Please include my email in the board meeting agenda package.

Kind regards,
Laura Davis

From: Laura Sehn
To: Trustees; Harold Caldwell; Shelley Green; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Ryan Painter; Elaine Leonard; Angie Hentze; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Diane Mcnally
Subject: and requesting that my email is added to the agenda for your next budtet meeting on April 13, 2021.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:58:28 PM

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Naomi and Mateo Sehn music video.mp4

Dear Board Members of School District 61 and Trustees,

Thank you so much for your attention to this email. I am writing in regards to the proposed budget cuts to the music programs in our schools and requesting that my email is added to the agenda for your next budget meeting on April 13, 2021.

I am a parent of 2 wonderful talented children that have benefited greatly from the music programs at our schools.

My oldest child found joy and comfort in music when she was able to join the choir and strings program in elementary school at Campus View. She has since been an excellent student and part of that is because of the music education she received from an early age. Her love for music grew as she moved on to Arbutus Middle School where she also joined the choir, and the band program, and auditioned to be part of the summit jazz band, and these extra-curricular activities became the highlight of her middle school years.
Once in High school, she joined every single musical ensemble she actually was capable of, and more! At the same time, she was able to keep up with her grades at an excellent level. She is now Finishing her first year of University at UVic's School of music, doing her Bachelor's of Music in composition and voice.
My second child has also been involved in music since grade one at Campus View, and could not wait to be in grade 4 to join the choir and the strings programs. And he was lucky enough to be part of the musical when he was in grade 5, which was one of his best experiences of that school year. He also continued in the strings and bandprogramat Arbutus Global Middle school, where he also auditioned to be part of the Summit Jazz band,
and being part of the music program was also one of the highlights of his middle school years. Now he is at Reynolds Secondary school and is part of the band program, Sr. Jazz Band, Pit Band and Vocal Jazz group as part of the Rhythm section. These activities have been a big part of his high school life, as the first couple of years seem to be difficult, and particularly with the pandemic, the music program has been extremely important in his education and his life.

I request you to please reconsider your budget and to see how important it is for children and families to be introduced to music at an early age. My children's lives have been so much richer from having the opportunity to learn music in Elementary school with Mrs. Onuma and Ms. Eadie and to have all the great support and encouragement from these wonderful music teachers over the years, Ms. Jennifer Hill, Mr. Michael Mazza, Mr. Dave Flello, Mr. Jamie Davis, and Ms. Katy Kerr.

Please consider that music is as important as academics, and sports, and mostly how music brings us together and these children learn how to cooperate and be part of something greater than them throughout their lives.

I have also attached a 5 min video of 2019 concerts at Reynolds, please review as these performances are always put together with enthusiasm and dedication from everyone involved. The first one is the last live performance my daughter had for Reynolds Sr. Jazz Band in 2020 at a GNS concert and the second one is my son Mateo in April 2019, his last year of middle school.

I thank you greatly for your time to read this email and watch this video and I hope that all of you and all of your families are well and healthy.

With many thanks,

Laura Alcaraz-Sehn

From: Leah Hollins
To: Trustees
Subject: Music in schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:05:07 PM

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Today on CBC I heard discussion about this which concerns me greatly. I want to be clear, I support music in schools and I would like to understand what can be done to ensure music continues. Please include my letter/note in your correspondence at the next board meeting which I understand will be held tomorrow, April 13 at 6pm. Regards, Leah

Leah A Hollins, CM, LLD (Hon)

Sent from my fantastic iPhone 8+

From: Lee Morris
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts to SD61 Music Education Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:08:01 PM

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To SD61 Superintendent and Trustees,

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

This is just to express my strong opposition to the very severe proposed budget cuts in the SD61 school music programs. When I was a student in Grade 6 and later in High School, the experience of studying musical instruments (violin and french horn), and playing with others in the school orchestra, was one of my most valuable educational experiences. The incalculable benefits of that experience continue to enrich my life even now at age 67 and I know the same is true for many other former music students.

The proposed cuts to the music budget would have a devastating impact on school music programs, which traditionally have enjoyed great success in Victoria. The loss of that opportunity by a generation of young people would impoverish the cultural environment in Victoria, perhaps for decades to come. That would be a terrible shame.

I invite the Trustees to consider spending priorities with great care, and to reject the mistaken notion that music education is an easy place to save money. There must be other ways and other adjustments that could be made to save vital music programs from these cuts. We citizens are relying on you to help preserve a healthy musical culture which depends on proper musical education.

Best regards,

Lee Morris

From: Les & Dani
To: Trustees; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Evidence to Inform SD61 2021 Budget Decisions and Proposed Cuts to Music Education
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:33:23 PM

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(*Please Include this Correspondence in the Board Meeting Package*)

Good Morning Superintendent Green, Associate Superintendent Caldwell, and SD61 Trustees,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the budget decisions for the upcoming year. I am aware that many many voices have expressed the concerns of the community about the proposed cuts to music education, so I will not repeat them here.

I will, however, share a few thoughts that I hope you will consider before making any decisions on the 2021 budget.

Although the opinions I am sharing are my own, I have 16 years of experience in different settings where the priority for decisions affecting large populations are based on measurable evidence; where the priorities are outlined in advance and the approach and rationale is provided ahead of time for all to review.

For the sake of brevity, from a clinical evidence perspective we know without a doubt the benefits of music to the health of individuals.* We know that music has a measurable effect in decreasing the experience of anxiety and depression, and has beneficial effects over the life course.*

We also know, or should know, the mental and social negative effects that the year-long pandemic has had on our children and youth. We know that we are losing students from the classroom, and we know that for many of those that stay, their early morning orchestra or band practice is the only thing that they are looking forward to, and for many, may be the only connection they have with other students in any meaningful way. Music teachers, like sports teachers are sometimes the only person in a school that a student may be able to identify with, and so the effects of removing this connection extends far far beyond a line item on a spreadsheet. Although the negative effects of the pandemic on the well-being of children and youth are already apparent, the significance of these effects are still yet to be realized on a population level. Like governments across the world have had to do during the pandemic, sometimes they need to

fund things because it's in the best interest of the health of the individuals in the population.

The last point I wanted to make, and equally important is the way we allow administrative structures to make decisions without ***fair and meaningful consultation*** and engagement from the very people they represent. While 'though-exchanges' may be thought to be well-meaning and inclusive, they dilute the issues and make it impossible to quantify the results. It essentially becomes a way for administrations to say 'yes we consulted', and then we did what we planned in the first place.

There are so many ways to make things more cost-effective, and so many things that are paid for that are also not evidence-based or even good value if you are willing to look. What's also missing is the value statements that are to be set out in advance of review of the budget, and then the review and justification for why one area is reduced as opposed to other measures that could be put in place. Why are multiple options with justifications not tabled with the opportunity to democratically decide as a district community, rather than the paternal approach where decisions are made for the betterment of others?

The epidemic that is yet to be realized (in my opinion) is of mental/emotional and social health, and by then the board administration will have made a decision whether or not to remove one of the fundamental tools that we have to help children and youth develop and maintain resilience in order to cope (at a minimum), and to thrive and to find joy and happiness in life (in the best case).

It's hard times without a doubt, but the only decision that the board is proposing may negatively affect the entire lives of literally thousands of our children and youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Best regards,

Leslea Duke
Victoria BC

*** WHO/Health Evidence Networks - Evidence for Decision-Makers. Health Evidence Network synthesis report 67 What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review. 2019.**

From: no-reply@sd61.bc.ca
To: Trustees
Subject: New submission from Contact The Board
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:28:55 PM

Full Name

Linda Cross

Email Address

Feedback Comments

Please include my remarks in the Board meeting agenda package.
I am writing to support the Middle School Music program, and to encourage Board Members to find another way to reduce spending.
This program meets all of the main goals of the School District including inclusion and support for those needing extra help.
This is a critical program to provide opportunities for all students to learn a skill which increases academic ability and provides a life long interest.

April 12, 2021

Board of Trustees,
Greater Victoria School District Board of Education
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
V8Z 1E8

Dear Trustees,

It has recently come to my attention that the Board of Trustees is once again considering substantially cutting funding to music programming. Music is essential. It was essential years ago when my children were in school and it is still essential, now that my grandchildren are in school. We have been through this before; please get the message, Music is essential!!!! No more cuts to music education!!!

Even worse, the current proposed cuts include the elimination of funding for program administration of the Island Ukuleles program. As a parent and now a grandparent of children who have been or are currently involved in this programming, I'm compelled to speak up and explain how incredibly important and outstanding this program is. Island Ukuleles has been a staple in our community since 1977, offering generations of youth in Greater Victoria a safe and welcoming place in which to learn, grow and make music.

The program offers more than instruction in music; it offers a community and a place for children to learn about teamwork, giving back to the community and finding a place to belong. The program is also supported by a society made up of parents, past participants and other community members who see the value that Island Ukuleles offers not only to the vast amount of youth involved, but also to the community at large. Many concerts over the years have been held in long-term care homes. Not only are these concerts greatly appreciated by the elderly but they also provide the students a valuable connection to and awareness of the elderly. The interactions between the students and the elderly at these concerts are beautiful to see. None of this would be possible without the invaluable support of the district teachers who administer the program.

Simply put, the Island Ukuleles program provides a staggering benefit to the youth in Greater Victoria and is heavily supported by the community. To withdraw the Board of Education's support in this important program would negatively impact hundreds, if not thousands of people in our region. We have found ways to continue through the pandemic, thanks mainly to the passionate teachers involved in the program. Please don't cut our last lifeline and end this crucial programming for our children, who are struggling more than ever.

Sincerely,

Linda Russell

Linda Russell

From: Lisa Cairns
To: Trustees
Subject: email letter in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:26:14 PM

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Dear trustees:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs.

Music programs in schools serve a number of important functions for students. First, they promote a strong sense of community. During the current year we have seen how important a sense of community is to maintaining mental health and, at a broader level, to supporting actions which work to the benefit of all, even if, at times, to the detriment of the individual. Children who may not find their "tribe" elsewhere in school may find a sense of community which they may otherwise lack through music and music classes. Playing in ensembles promotes the need to be aware of and listen to others, and allows children to understand how each of us, through our individual contributions, contributes to a greater whole.

Participating in music performances also gives children a sense of accomplishment which they may not achieve in school through sports or academics. Multiple children that I know who shine in their school's musical programs are not academically or athletically particularly successful, but are able to have a sense of success and accomplishment through their school's music programs. A sense of achievement is an important contributor to a sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

For children whose parents are unable to afford private tuition, school programs are, in all likelihood, the only opportunity that they have to learn how to play a musical instrument. This is a skill which they may use for self-expression, emotional solace, to connect with others, or as an entrée into a musical community once they are adults.

For all of these reasons, I believe that music programs are important in elementary and middle schools, and I strongly oppose the proposed cuts to these programs.

Sincerely,

K. Lisa Cairns MD MPH

From: Lisa Hoskins
To: Trustees
Subject: Fw: SD61 Budget Cuts to Middle School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:35:33 PM

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Hello,
Further to my email below please add it to the agenda of the school board meeting.
Thank you
Lisa Hoskins s

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Lisa Hoskins
To: jwatters@sd61.bc.ca <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; nduncan@sd61.bc.ca <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; ahentze@sd61.bc.ca <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; tferris@sd61.bc.ca <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; rpainter@sd61.bc.ca <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; sgreen@sd61.bc.ca <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>; hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; educ.minister@gov.bc.ca <educ.minister@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021, 08:33:18 AM PDT
Subject: SD61 Budget Cuts to Middle School Music Programs

Hello SD61 Trustees, SD 61 Superintendent, District Superintendents and the Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister for Education,

I am writing today to express my disappointment of the intention to cut middle school music programs in Victoria. My eldest daughter attends shoreline middle school and my younger child will be there in a couple of years. The shoreline middle school music program has been an amazing experience and a wonderful learning opportunity that my child would have not have otherwise had. It has built community within the school, across grades, and has provided an outlet during this incredibly difficult time that we have been experiencing.

I am not an educator, but I do know that the middle school time and experience is one of much growth, development and exploration. The opportunity the middle school music program contributes to the school experience for students is huge and not only is a learning opportunity but an outlet for many students who may not thrive in other areas. The arts is always the place (including libraries for example) are always the place people go to when they are thinking about saving money - but this is wrong. You would not consider cutting our PE or sports programs in the same way. I would really like you to dig deep and figure out where the money you need can come from but please don't take away the music

program.

I have included the Minister for Education here - I'm not sure if you budget shortfall is due to greater expenditures due to the pandemic, but it seems to me that if that is the case the Ministry for Education should be supporting all school districts to ensure that the current level of programming is maintained. The students have already missed out on so much during this last year, please don't make that loss even greater in the years to come.

My daughters regularly count the number of things they have missed out on and it makes me so sad for them as these are experiences or time that they will never get back. When I think about my own middle school experience (though in a different district) one of the things I remember the most is my musical experience - again an expereince I wouldn't have had other than at school.

Please reconsider cutting middle school music programs in Victoria. This is not right for our school community, our students.

Thank you,

Lisa Hoskins

From: Lisa Sykes
To: Trustees
Subject: Save Elementary and Middle School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:27:46 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To: Shelley Green, Associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Lisa Sykes, and I am a parent, past student and community member in Victoria, BC.
I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.
I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits at the elementary and middle school levels in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.
https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/the-benefits-of-music-education
Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.
The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.
These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.
I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut.
The impact would be felt province-wide.
Fight for arts in schools.
Please do not disadvantage students in this way.
I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,
Lisa Sykes

From: Lisbie Rae
To: Trustees
Subject: cutting music teachers???
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:07:36 PM

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Please include my letter in the correspondence for the next trustees' meeting.

To the Board and Trustees of SChool District 61:

I understand that in order to address a $7 million shortfall in funding, you are proposing cuts to one programme in particular -- music. Why was this programme selected? I have a PhD in theatre and a three year teaching certificate in Physical Education and am frankly tired of the Arts and Physical Education being first on the block when money is tight. Students develop a full range of their abilities when they are offered a well-rounded, balanced educational programme. Lopping off one part of the programme because it happens to meet financial goals will deprive them of opportunities to develop, and stunt their growth. Other subjects suffer too when the arts are absent, as the arts often contribute to a positive attitude to the whole school experience.

In these stressful times, society desperately needs citizens who can collaborate and be sensitive to the needs of others around them. Apart from the obvious benefits of learning an instrument and being able to express feelings through music, a great choir, jazz or band programme teaches students to listen, to modulate their voice, to become part of a larger whole.

Victoria is a vibrant city graced with many cultural organizations that are replenished year after year by eager young performers, artists and audience members. They are educated to appreciate the traditions and artistic expressions our communities offer. Please do not cut off these opportunities for our young people, nor deprive the arts in this area of their future contribution.

If you must cut, consider cuts to administration or more equitable distribution of cuts, and leave these vital programmes in place.

Yours
Dr. Lisbie Rae, PhD

--
Save the Date - Thursday April 15 7:30pm EDT - for a 90-minute concert featuring a tapestry of Canadian talent "Together in Concert: In Solidarity with African Grandmothers"

Concert website: www.cdngrandmothers.com

From: Lois Leslie
To: Trustees
Subject: Please add to correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:45:53 PM

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As a parent and grandparent who believes that musical education is a critical aspect of a complete education, and whose grandchildren are all currently benefiting from elementary and middle school programs threatened by the proposed cuts, I am writing to urge **all trustees and the Superintendent to vote no to the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school programs and help to maintain accessibility for all young people.**

Thank you,

Lois Leslie
Victoria

Sent from my iPhone

From: Lone Peep
To: Trustees
Subject: for correspondence at the board meeting on Tues Apr 13th
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:52:49 PM

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Dear Trustees,

I was utterly dismayed to hear that the Board is considering cutting music programs for elementary and middle school students.
It has been scientifically proven that music education is at least as valuable to the mental, emotional, and disciplinary skills of children as are math, science, english and social studies.
Given that Covid-19 has had extremely detrimental impacts on the mental health of youth everywhere, it is absolutely unconscionable to remove music education from the lives of students.
My two kids have suffered greatly from mental health issues due to the pandemic, and music has been a lifesaver for them over this past year.
I urge you to consider your statement that "the student experience is at the heart of all we do in SD61" and please continue to recognize the social value of music and music education in our schools.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Best regards,
Penelope Hagan

--

From: Lorraine Min
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposal of Major Cuts to Music Programs in Elementary and Middle Schools in Victoria
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:42:21 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear all,

I am writing to express how incredibly valuable and enriching the Music Program at Lansdowne Middle School is, and that it really is a beacon of light and hope for the students and our community with regards to BC's Public Education system. Both of my children (age 13 and 15) have been in the band and choir programs during their years at Lansdowne. And in addition to the amazing pride and support from the school's community, it is one of the best music programs I have seen in all of my years as a former full-time music professor in both the US and Canada, and as an active professional concert pianist.

Lansdowne is very lucky to have such a motivated, enthusiastic, caring, and good, musically educated staff which is why the program has continued to grow and remained so popular. All the kids from various and diverse backgrounds are excited to play and sing music together! This is clearly evidenced in all the school concerts! In a world which has shown itself to be so divided today, how incredible that music has continued to be a universal language with no racial or classist boundaries. It really is what helps to feed our souls and enriches our lives every day. But for those of us who are lucky enough to experience this joy of music as adults, it often starts from life's early stage of being kids -- who need to experience meaningful music making from and with their teachers in school. This is exactly what inspired me to pursue my passion in music as my career choice.

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria. This proposal of major cuts from the school music programs could potentially cause a devastating long term blow. Please re-consider this idea carefully and vote, no.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Thank you,

Sincerely,
Lorraine Min

From: Lorrainne
To: Trustees
Subject: Support for music in schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:22:26 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting

I appreciate the seriousness of the budget constraints that schools are facing, but I urge you to reconsider cutting music programs. For far too many children the school programs are the only access to live music that they have, and the opportunity to learn about, create and perform music is a life long gift. I grew up in a small town on the Island and my father was one of the founders of the local band. My memory is that any live performance that came to town my parents took me to, so I was very fortunate to not only have the opportunity to take piano lessons but to experience a truly amazing variety of live music as I was growing up. This has lead to a life long love of the symphony and opera and concerts. I am aware that many families can't begin to offer those same opportunities to their children, regardless of how much they may want to, and it is here that schools play a vital role.

Please know that I strongly support music in the schools.

Thank you.

Lorrainne Dixon

From: Louise Manga
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd:
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:25:18 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Louise Manga** <>
Date: Mon, Apr 12, 2021 at 7:21 PM
Subject:
To: <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>
In case I wasn't clear in the following email,I would like it included in the correspondence at your April 13th board meeting.

I understand that a proposal to make a major cut to elementary and middle school music programs is being contemplated. Please do not make these cuts.
My grandchildren were so fortunate to have been able to participate in both strings and band at the elementary and middle school level. Had they not had the opportunity to do so through the school (School District 61), they would never have had the opportunity to experience playing a string or band instrument and playing together in a large group.
Music provides an excellent opportunity to expose developing brains to new ways of thinking.
Please do not deny future cohorts the opportunity to participate in these music programs.
Please make this email available to all trustees to be discussed at the April 13th meeting.
Yours sincerely
Louise Manga

From: Louise Oborne
To: Trustees
Subject: Maintaining music programs in elementary and middle school programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:35:32 PM

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Dear Trustees,

It was with dismay that I read about your proposed cuts to music programs in our schools. The value of music education (and, indeed, all arts education) cannot be overstated, especially in public schools. Music literacy is just as vital as literacy in mathematics, science, and other core subject areas. Music for many offers a rich avenue of self-exploration and the fostering of self-esteem. It should not just be the purview of privately funded institutions.

We have seen ample evidence that music has had an enormous impact on the well-being of people during the pandemic. Without the education of future musicians and music appreciators, we risk weakening our resilience in the face of future challenges and periods of isolation. And we deprive our children of experiencing of a fundamental human activity that reaches beyond themselves.

Victoria prides itself on nurturing a robust arts culture and community. Cutting funding to a long-standing educational connection with the Victoria Symphony and eliminating other music programs seems deeply wrong.

Please include this letter in the next board meeting agenda package.

Sincerely,

Louise Oborne, Victoria, BC

From:	Jordan Watters
To:	Lynn Campbell
Cc:	Victoria Hanley; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject:	Re: Do not cut music
Date:	Monday, April 12, 2021 6:07:11 PM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming - as requested, we will include it the upcoming board meeting agenda package. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61

www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Lynn Campbell
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 3:53 PM
To:
Cc: Lynn Campbell
Subject: Do not cut music

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Hello School Board Trustees and Superintendents,

I am a parent of children at Cedar Hill and Lake Hill schools. I have been learning about the horrible planned cuts to the school district's music programs. I am shocked and dismayed by these potential cuts, which I'm told includes cutting 5/6ths of the existing programs. This is not acceptable! No cuts are acceptable!

My children have benefited enormously from many of the school district's music programs and it would be tragic to lose any of it.

They have diligently practiced and attended classes with their friends and amazing teachers. They have learned skills as musicians and singers that they would not

have had if these programs were not offered at the schools. Even more importantly, these classes have given them a lot to look forward to in a pandemic, and taught them life skills including supporting their friends, positive mental health, safe and fun socializing and confidence-boosting skills that will last a lifetime IF they can continue, as they plan to, through high school.

There are other options, including fundraising, that I'm confident majority of parents would support to avoid any cuts. We all need to do our part to keep music in schools for our children.
Please include this letter in Tuesday's board meeting agenda package.

Sincerely
Lynn Campbell

From: Lynn Campbell
To: Trustees
Subject: Do not cut music!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:52:31 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Hello School Board Trustees and Superintendents,

Please include this letter in Tuesday's board meeting agenda package.

I am a parent of children at Cedar Hill and Lake Hill schools. I have been learning about the horrible planned cuts to the school district's music programs. I am shocked and dismayed by these potential cuts, which I'm told includes cutting 5/6ths of the existing programs. This is not acceptable! No cuts are acceptable!

My children have benefited enormously from many of the school district's music programs and it would be tragic to lose any of it.

They have diligently practiced and attended classes with their friends and amazing teachers. They have learned skills as musicians and singers that they would not have had if these programs were not offered at the schools. Even more importantly, these classes have given them a lot to look forward to in a pandemic, and taught them life skills including supporting their friends, positive mental health, safe and fun socializing and confidence-boosting skills that will last a lifetime IF they can continue, as they plan to, through high school.

There are other options, including fundraising, that I'm confident majority of parents would support to avoid any cuts. But government needs to do it's part. We all need to do our part to keep music in schools for our children.

Sincerely
Lynn Campbell

From: Lynnéa Chan
To: Trustees
Subject: Please Reconsider Music Program Funding Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:28:55 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

If you could, please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Hello SD61 Trustees,

This letter is regarding the proposed budget cuts to the music programs in SD61.

I have learned that due to a large deficit, many children may lose the opportunity for a rich music education. I strongly urge you to vote against this. As a recent graduate of UVic with a degree in Fine Arts, I know how valuable it is to have a school that supports and funds the arts early in one's education. I was involved in Voice throughout all of my young life and it was a place I built self confidence as well as community. To this day I find so much joy in making and performing music, something that is only so fulfilling because of my school's willingness to support music and theatre programs. I know this might not mean much to you, as you don't know me and my case is mundane rather than remarkable, but please consider the future musicians who will suffer from these cuts. Consider the message it sends to aspiring artists to prioritize other programs over what brings them joy and self-expression. *VOTE NO.* Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Lynnéa Chan

--

Lynnéa Chan (she/her)

April 12, 2021

To the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61, Shelley Green and associates.

My name is Malia Allan and I am a mother to 3 children currently attending school at Marigold and Colquitz schools. I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed cuts to middle school music programs. I strongly feel that these programs have immense value that is being ignored. SD61 claims that **the student experience is at the heart of all that SD61 does**. If this is true, then students need to be consulted before these music programs are cut.

My daughter has written a letter below to express her concern and experience. I want to emphasize that music has been the highlight in all her years of schooling. Many students feel that music is the program that keeps them engaged in school, and this has been our family experience. As we watch our child navigate middle school, it is apparent that music and her connections made in the music program are at the foundation of her success.

Our experience with the grade 5 strings program was also excellent and allowed my daughter to dip her feet in the band program in a year when she felt confident and assured. We were so grateful for this experience. This program removes the barrier to entry for many students.

On a community level I am concerned that the proposed cuts will further create a "have" and "have not" culture within SD61 communities. Many families can not afford to pursue private music lessons. If these opportunities are not part of the school experience, many children will never be afforded the opportunity to pick up an instrument.

Please consider all other options before you make cuts to the current music program in SD61. Please include this letter in the board meeting agenda package.

Best regards,
Malia Allan

To the SD61 School Board,

My name is Elizabeth Allan and I go to Colquitz Middle School. My experience with the music program has been amazing. This program has been fun, helpful, entertaining and has even helped me find friends with the same or similar interests. If you honestly believe that "the student experience is at the heart of all you do at SD61," then please don't cut our music programs.

Sincerely,
Liz Allan

From: Mami Schouten
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:08:35 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

My name is Mami Schouten, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Mami Schouten

From: Manjit Aitken
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed Music Cuts to SD61
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:00:35 PM

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Music letter

April 12, 2021
Dear Shelley Green, Associates and School Board Trustees for Greater Victoria SD61,

My name is Manjit Aitken. I am a parent of two students who studied music at Central Middle School and Oak Bay High School. Their studies included Concert Band, Jazz Band, R&B, Orchestra and multiple choirs. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding cutting funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

Please consider the following:

- Restricting access to these benefits is a short-sighted and a giant step backwards in education.
- These cut backs will negatively impact student life quality and engagement in education.
- The cut backs will rob students of opportunities to think creatively, learn valuable skills like working on a team and taking on challenges. It will rob them of opportunities to serve their

  communities.
- Skilled teachers will lose their jobs.

My children's lives have flourished under the tutelage of their music educators. Their experiences performing for the community, taking part in the Oak Bay Tea Party marching parade and concerts, and getting to be part of a strong and connected community within the schools has been the backbone of their high school experiences.

I strongly encourage you to fight for and support arts in schools. Please do not approve these budget cuts.

Please include this letter in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,
Manjit Aitken

From: Margaret Baker
To: Trustees
Subject: In correspondence for the April 13th School Trustees Board Meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:28:01 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To all Trustees,

Please keep the music programs in this school district alive. The benefits go well beyond just playing an instrument especially in this time of uncertainty. We need music in our schools! As a participant and as the parent of children who had music in elementary, middle and highschool, it is an art that lasts a lifetime.

Sincerely,
Margaret Baker

From: Margaretha Burnett
To: Trustees
Subject: Please list this email letter in correspondence at your board meeting on Tuesday, April 13.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:46:05 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Trustees,
That you are thinking of cutting the music programme in the SD61 is tragic. Music captures the imagination and trains the mind. As you are all aware, there is so much research that supports the cognitive and social benefits of a musical education as is provided in many of our district schools. Kids in the world need a variety of activities to choose from to allow them to grow and thrive emotionally and cognitively. Music is one such! Consider your actions and inventively think how to broaden and expand possibilities instead of restricting them. Where there is a will, there is a way!
Respectfully yours,
Margaretha Burnett

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Maria Manna and I am a community member in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.
I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.
Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.
The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.
These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.
I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.
I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Regards,
Maria Manna
www.bcvocalistsociety.com (FOUNDER)
www.u-jam.ca (CO-FOUNDER)
www.mariamanna.ca
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Manna

Inducted into the Alberta Music Archives

2013 Recipient of the Governor General Caring Canadian Award
2013 Recipient of the YoUnlimited Woman of Style Award
2016 Recipient of the Governor-General Sovereign Medal

From: marie jip
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence for the April 13 Board Meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:48:25 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To: SD31 Trustees ans Superintend

Re: Proposed budgetary cuts to SD61 Music Programs

Dear Sir, Madam,

We are writing to voice our disapproval of the current proposal to make major cuts to the SD61 elementary and middle school music programs as a way to address deficit. Music education provides children with very important life skills and is critical to their academic, creative, emotional and social development. It is very important to keep the resources needed to engage youth in arts in a meaningful way. Please vote no to this proposal.

Sincerely,

Jean-Pierre and Marie Veran

From: marilyn brewer
To: Trustees
Subject: Meeting of Board of Education re: proposed cuts in music education programming
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:04:51 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

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I am writing with deep concern for the proposed cuts to music education and arts programming in the elementary and middle school curriculum. Cuts that I understand will be used to shore up a deficit brought about for multiple reasons, and not specifically due to music and arts programming.

Having worked in the arts for most of my professional career (I am now retired) this is not the first time that a school board when facing budget constraints/deficits has, in what has often seemed like a knee-jerk reaction, taken the decision to hack away at arts and music education automatically. Implying, it has seemed to me, that such areas of education are superfluous and of little value.

In my own personal life, I was fortunate to have a music teacher at my school (and a beloved arts teacher) who, in my early years spoke to my Mother to say, "Marilyn has a lovely voice. Have you ever thought of giving her singing lessons?" Which, in spite of being from a working class family, my Mother and Father, with this teacher's encouragement enrolled me at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Fortunately, with the help of scholarships, I went on to study and became a professional opera singer, performing with the Canadian Opera Company in my early professional life.

Thus, the door was opened to a lifelong love of not only opera, but all forms of music, especially, classical and symphonic music. And now I am giving back, by volunteering with our own wonderful Victoria Symphony Orchestra.

Music has, simply put, been a major influence in my life, bringing me a deep and grateful appreciation for that music teacher many years ago, who recognized a talent in one of her students which has made a profound difference in my life .....and continues.

Please consider the importance that music and the arts can have on a young child's formative years to sew the seeds of appreciation that can endure throughout one's life.

I request, that my letter be included as correspondence at the next Trustees Board meeting. Thank you.

Marilyn J. Brewer

Sent from my iPad

From: Mary Collins
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Programs in schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:48:13 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my email in correspondence for the next Board meeting

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard all children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO. Let us continue to ensure that all children in our schools have the opportunity to benefit from learning about and playing music which can provide lifelong positive benefits to their intellectual and emotional development.

Thank you for your consideration of my request and I would be pleased to provide any further information if required.

Sincerely

Mary Collins (grandmother of a Grade 1 student at Campus View Elementary School)

From: Mary Crooks
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; dmcnally@sd61.bc; canduncan@sd61.bc.ca; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Music School Programs and School Budget
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:07:44 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Mary Crooks, and I am a Community Member in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would also like to share my own performance as a music student when I attended school. I was always the outsider never being able to fit in at school. Gym and sports was not for me nor any of the other extra school activities. My mother used to tell me as a baby & child that my behaviour/attitude would change as soon as music was being played. As a baby, I was stung by a bee which had me screaming, but unable to tell my parents why I was so

upset. The only thing that soothed me was music. I struggled in school, but music kept me grounded. I was a happy child and student when I was involved with music during my school day. When I entered high school, music was a huge outlet for me. However, in grade 9, I went to a school where the music teacher was not a kind person. I had to take a summer course which was fortunately was being taught by the music teacher from the other other high school. I excelled at my summer course and pushed my parents to allow me to switch schools so I could be a part of her music program. My parents agreed and it was the best decision that my parents & I had made. I excelled in music class which extended into my other classes. I then joined the school band which was an amazing experience especially learning discipline as quite a few of our band rehearsals were at 8am prior the 9am school start. My school grades picked up and by grade 11, I was doing very well both with music and in my academic studies. When I finished my grade 11 school year, my parents decided to send me to an all girls private school in a different province which meant having to repeat grade 11. As the school focused on academic learning, the school did not have a music program though they did have an arts program which had no interest to me. My grades dropped and I barely passed my classes. I was missing music and was barely alive going through the motions of my classes. The bullying continued at this school and frankly did not really have an outlet. I complained a lot to my parents who asked me if I wanted to complete my final year returning to the high school. Everyone that I had gone through school with since grade 3 had all graduated and moved onto college/university so I returned to the private school. By the end of that school year, I had lost all interest in school and decided not to pursue anymore schooling, but working instead. I took the year off, but the following year. I did return to school in September, but less than a month into the term, the teachers went on strike which dragged on. By week 3, I had lost interest in school so dropped out then left town to work again out of province. Sadly, I continued to work losing interest in taking any school courses. Today, I have lost my job of 23 years due to health issues, but found an online course that interested me, but struggling to apply myself. I know that when music was taken away from me in school so did my willingness/interest in applying myself to my other classes.

Please don't take away music from the schools. The children and young adults need the discipline and learning skills that they are taught either by singing or playing a musical instrument. They need this outlet to express and grow their talent as well as maturity. To remove or make these cuts would be harmful not helpful to each student that is participating in the music program. Keep Music Alive In Our Schools, **PLEASE!**

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Mary Crooks

From: Mary Kennedy
To: Trustees
Subject: Letter to SD61 Trustees and Superintendent re: proposed music cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:48:40 PM

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Dear SD61 Trustees,
I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.
There is a multitude of research to support the idea that music is essential in all our lives, and most particularly, in the lives of children. Making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. Music is also instrumental in overall development and I append to this letter an outline of a presentation I made in 2018 on the subject. I ask to to read it and reconsider this proposed action. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.
Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.
Please include my letter in the correspondence for the meeting on April 13, 2021
Dr. Mary Kennedy
Associate Professor Emeritus
School of Music
University of Victoria

Presentation Outline

Student development in relation to music in schools

How music affects overall learning and development

According to Howard Gardner's theory (*Frames of Mind*, 1983), music is itself a distinct intelligence along with many others: verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, interpersonal (the ability to communicate in person-to-person situations), and intrapersonal intelligence (the ability to relate to inner states of being and spirituality). Traditionally schools have concentrated on the first two, bundling them together to teach the 3 R's.
Gardner's theory has evolved over the years to include two other intelligences (naturalist and existential), but the important point is that music as much a right to be developed in school as any other intelligence. Without it, a person's education is not complete.
Recent research has claimed that music makes you smarter—and despite all the attention given to these studies, the safest conclusion is that music makes you smarter *at music*. And yes, studying music does engage parts of the brain in ways that other subjects do not.
Cutietta (2001) puts in this way:
Musicians have been found to possess larger *planum temporale* and thicker *corpus callosum* in the brain because their musical mental ability has been developed. If they had not had musical exposure and training, this area would have been neglected and thus underdeveloped. It would be as if one of the circus tent poles was shorter than all the rest. This in turn would negatively affect all the other areas of the tent as well.
As our understanding of the brain increases, it is becoming clear that by and large we have underestimated the extent of mental abilities that must be developed in childhood. It is conceivable that at some point in the future, schools that restrict their instruction to the so-called academics without giving equal attention to the rest of the child's mental development could conceivably be held accountable for neglecting their mission to educate children. (16)
So how does music affect overall learning and development?
The **Coalition for Music Education in Canada** has developed package for teachers, parents, and communities to use when music programs are threatened. The Educational Value of Music lists the many benefits of a music education:
EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MUSIC
Music contributes to the development of:
Language Skills—reading, listening, and speech
Mathematic and Scientific Skills—rhythmic training/acoustics of music
Overall Academic Achievement—success in one area can motivate a student to work harder in another, more challenging one
Imagination—aural and visual imagery
Creativity—problem-solving abilities
MUSIC FOSTERS PERSONAL GROWTH
Music Contributes to the Development of:
Positive self-concept—achievement and recognition
Self-Expression—cathartic value
Self-discipline—responsibility and perseverance
Social Skills—mutual respect, cooperative behavior, and friendships

Aesthetic Taste—appreciation of beauty
Psychomotor Skills—coordination
Music Benefits the Individual, the Community, and Humankind
Provides skills essential for living in today's society
Provides enjoyable life-long recreational opportunities
Possesses therapeutic value
Provides career opportunities
Fosters community involvement by participation as a performer or listener
Enhances the quality of life for both the community and individual
Promotes an historical appreciation of our own and other cultural heritages
Communicates feelings facilitating international understanding
(Coalition for Music Education in Canada—Music Advocacy Kit, 7-2)
The ability to make, listen to, and feel music is inherent in all of us. It is an essential part of who we are as humans. John Blacking (1973) claims that "there is so much music in the world that it is reasonable to suppose that music, like language and possibly religion, is a species-specific train of man." (p. 7). Music is in our DNA and therefore crucial to our overall development. We neglect it at our peril!
I urge you to reconsider the proposed cuts to music in SD61 schools.
Dr. Mary Kennedy
Associate Professor Emeritus
School of Music
University of Victoria
Victoria, BC
Dr. Mary Kennedy
Associate Professor Emeritus
School of Music
University of Victoria
Victoria, BC

From: McAllister/Cordier
To: Trustees
Subject: Music programmes
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:38:18 PM

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I understand cuts to your music programme are being considered.

Please don't do that!

The introduction to music is a gift that keeps on giving throughout a person's life, and those children who do not receive that gift are being poorly served by the adults running their schools.

Please include this message in what is submitted to the board.

Mary McAllister

MARY REHER, Music Therapist; BMT, MTA, FAMI
5900 Pirates Road, Pender Island, B.C. VON 2M2
250-629-6431

Please include this correspondence in your April 13th meeting.

To the Trustees,

I urge you not to cut music programs in the schools of SD 61. These are an important outlet for the children and help to build music literacy, as well as inner discipline.

I cannot overestimate the value of exposure to classical music and the musicians of the Victoria Symphony. On Pender Island, I have seen the benefits of such music programs to my own children as they went through school. I will never forget taking my kids at preschool age and older to Symphony concerts in the gym, being able to sit right in front of the violins. Getting close up with fine musicians in small or large ensembles is an incredible life experience. Having these experiences within the schools means <u>everyone</u> benefits, no matter their background or economic bracket.

The ongoing music education programs are important because children learn in different ways, and there are many children who will be left in the dust if they do not have this opportunity. I am a Music Therapist and worked 20 years in another school district in B.C. Sometimes, it was participation in a regular music education program that helped some of my referred children to access their inner light and let it shine. The study of music can expand the brain! I recommend that you elect not to cut these programs.

Sincerely,

Mary Reher

VICTORIA SYMPHONY

Christian Kluxen, Music Director

trustees@sd61.bc.ca

April 12, 2021

Dear SD61 Trustees,

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

I am writing on behalf of the Victoria Symphony (VS) to express our grave concern over the proposed cuts to your elementary and middle school music programs. These cuts, including cuts to a long-term and valuable partnership with the Victoria Symphony, would have a long-lasting negative impact on the children in our public schools and we ask that you re-consider.

The VS believes that all children, regardless of their socio-economic or family situation, should be provided with access to the proven benefits that a musical education provides. The idea that only students attending private schools have access to musicians and musical experiences of the highest quality is obviously exclusive and works against our basic belief that access to music and art should be universal. **Music is one of the most profound and tangible means of human expression and should be accessible to everyone.** Understanding and enjoying music requires a unique body of knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking, and these are learned. VS Education Programs have long strived to make this learning accessible to as broad a range of demographics in our community as possible.

"VS Education Concerts" are part of the proposed cuts. These events have been specially designed to engage elementary and early middle school students and have been subsidized by the VS in the past because we know how important they are. In recent years, partnerships with local school districts like SD61 have allowed us to reach over 10,000 students each season by inviting them to attend a live symphony concert in person during school hours. Over the years we have been working to deepen the educational impact of these concerts by providing teachers in the district with lesson plans and teacher workshops designed by award-winning educator and Orff specialist Marcelline Moody. We have also offered classroom visits by VS musicians who create a personal connection with the students and prepare them for what they are to hear at the live concert event. During the pandemic, with the support of the BC Arts Council we have continued to work hard to create digital learning modules for these concerts that we plan to make available to all school districts in the region for free. The notion that there might not even be a teacher able to work with us to connect with students in SD61 is heartbreaking.

Advancing musical education for young people is not just about guaranteeing a future audience for non-corporate music, it is about providing as many people as we can with musical literacy and creating more vibrant and well-rounded informed communities in the process.

Please vote NO! to the proposed cuts to restricting elementary and middle school music programs and help to maintain accessibility for all young people.

Matthew White, CEO Victoria Symphony

620 View Street, Suite 610, Victoria BC Canada V8W 1J6
Administration 250.385.9771 Box Office 250.385.6515 Fax 250.385.7767
www.victoriasymphony.ca

From: Maureen
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:34:47 AM

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Hello SD61 Trustees

Below is my email sent to Deb Whitten regarding the proposed cuts to our school district's music programs. Please include my email with the responses at Tuesday evening's meeting.

I would also like to add that when I was in elementary school one of the highlights for me and my sisters was the choir program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,
Maureen Cain

Begin forwarded message:

> -----Original Message-----
> From: Maureen
> Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 1:19 AM
> To: dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca
> Subject: Cuts to music programs
>
> Hi Deb
>
> I'm Shelby's mom. You were principal when Shelby attended Monterey Middle School and likely recall her.
>
> I just wanted to let you know how much music has meant to Shelby and her younger brother Nathan throughout their entire public schooling. For Shelby it gave her a sense of belonging especially through the difficult middle school years. For Nathan it has given him the much needed movement breaks and a place of acceptance where his learning disability isn't noticed. Nathan says that choir has taught him responsibility and that he's made good friends.
>
> My kids have been influenced by wonderful music teachers starting with Gail Evans at Willows Elementary who brought fabulous musicals to the community, So many kids were involved that they had to run two shows a day for several days to get all the parents through. Her program is massive and affects a lot of kids.
>
> Denver Rawson taught band to Nathan at Lansdowne Middle School. He's a great teacher and he had those kids pumped for every concert!! There were so many kids involved that it took two nights of concerts to showcase all of the students to a packed gym.
>
> At Oak Bay High we have two amazing teachers in Tina Horwood and Steve Price Together they have 10 to 12 choir ensembles each year. IN ONE SCHOOL!! Both my kids sang in timetable and outside-the-timetable choirs. Last year there were 36 boys in the men's choir!!
>

> Tina and Steve run an outstanding program and they would not be able to offer the high quality programming if students came to grade 9 with zero experience and knowledge. Some of their students have received music scholarships while others continue to sing in college and community choirs.
>
> These are not small programs with waning numbers. These are full classes which keep kids engaged in meaningful activities that can last a lifetime. It boggles the mind that the district would even contemplate budget cuts to programs that are so popular and important for growth and development. The level of participation speaks for itself. Even the parents are fully engaged - I've seen more family and friends attend band or choir concerts than show up for a school sporting event.
>
> These programs also give back to the community in ways that other programs or sports do not. They sing to our elders in care facilities, they play at music festivals and go carolling in local communities. They share joy and bring happiness. And we sure need this these days! Our kids need this!
>
> I honestly don't know how my kids would have made it through school without band and choir. If you're a bit different or not quite athletic enough to make a sports team or suffer from ADHD or dyslexia, there are few places in the school system where you are included and accepted. Band and choir are the exception. They're one of the few places in school where who and what you are doesn't matter. By cutting funding to music, band and choir you would be discriminating against those kids who are already on the fringe and you will end up spending more money on psychological services and learning assistance.
>
> Please do not cut our music programs. They are so important to our children and their health and overall well-being.
>
> Regards, Maureen
>
> Maureen Cain
>

From: Megan Bergmann
To: Harold Caldwell; Trustees
Cc: Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green
Subject: Please, please vote NO! And protect our students
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:40:02 PM

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Good evening Sd61 Superintendent and trustees.

I would like to take this opportunity, to have my opinion registered and shared in correspondence at your meeting for April 13th.

I Urge you to vote NO in making budget cuts to the middle school music programs in our district.

I strongly believe that music is a language that unites...history has proven music's ability to unite cultures, generations, geographical locations, gender and many other aspects of the human experience. By removing this opportunity for our middle schoolers you risk deep injury to the moral structure of our society.

I speak to you now, as a parent of three SD61 students. My two oldest are now at the high school level, and our amazing humans who were well supported and encouraged through their middle school years both in classroom and particularly in the music program community. I believe if they hadn't had that safe and caring community while learning the unifying language Music during those developmental years their Experience may have been very different (I have observed this with families who have not had sought out the benefits of these communities for their middle school students). Additionally, both of my high school students have continued their involvement in the many musical opportunities both in and out of the timetable in high school, which I believe they may not have chosen had they not had the foundation of middle school programs. If you were to read my grade 12 students yearbook quote and grad quote You will see the evidence that the music program at OBH has been her safe place these past four years High school.

My youngest child is currently in grade 7 at Lansdowne middle school, and I have seen the effect that your cuts last year have already impacted on her experience in middle school. No more choir...for a student who processes ger emotions in song. This is beyond detrimental at an age when she is learning how to navigate complex social structures, value herself as a person all while trying to learn academically in preparation fir her future. These are foundational and vulnerable years for these young people, and any community such as a music program that gives them a safe place to be and self express is something that you should be throwing money at not taking it away. I am constantly questioning my decision to leave my grade 7 child in the Public school system, with the many deficits I believe her education is already facing with the present curriculum.

I am vehemently opposed to any recommendation that would take away a safety net as valuable as our music programs which would put our children at an even greater risk. My vote is NO and I respectfully request that yours is too. Please honour our community by listening to what is being communicated, as I have voted you into these positions and I trust that you will make decisions that will safeguard our children.

Respectfully, Megan Bergmann

From: Megan Brady
To: Trustees
Subject: Budget Cuts Regarding Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:08:09 PM

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Dear Sirs and Ma'ams involved in the process of budget cuts and other related issues,

I request that this letter be read aloud in Tuesday's Agenda Package. Thank you.
I write to you today as a student of School District 61 with the hope that I may sway your minds from limiting the musical education of students within your district. Music develops academic and critical thinking skills, plays an integral role in both modern day society and the community of SD61, and brings life and joy to students of all ages.
Music has been scientifically proven to further develop a child's critical thinking, problem solving, and academic skills in multiple subjects including Maths and Language Arts. The process of learning to read music has many similarities to reading and deciphering code. Understanding how different chords and notes run together, minor and major keys, progressions and more all relate closely to puzzle solving and math. Music is the culmination of a child's learning process. While sports develop a child physically and core classes teach them the necessities of life skills, the luxury of music, and that is what music is, a luxury to be enjoyed by all, surpasses what most education degrees offer a child. Why limit the potential of the future population? Will the restriction of the musical arts benefit the future students of School District 61? Are sports and other extracurricular activities to be valued more highly than music classes? The modern education system caters to the needs of the individual learner. As such, each student should receive equal opportunity to explore which extracurricular activity best suits them. To reduce and cut any such class is to rob them of the ability to determine for themselves who they wish to be. Please, continue offering the children of SD61 the opportunity to choose who they want to be whether that is an athlete or a musician. A well rounded education is one that teaches the child more than desk learning; it is one that teaches them to be who they want to be.
As well, the benefits of music to a child's development are not strictly academia based. By playing in a band, concert, or choir a child can connect with many other individuals of similar interests and form lifelong bonds that will flourish through the trials of time and disaster. This is seen with how the music programs are helping children remain positive during these trying times of COVID-19. On a larger level, the impact of choirs and bands on the community is

irreplaceable. Seniors delight at musical performances and the interaction with young people they receive. This occurs at society functions and with churches as well where members of the community get to experience the joy of school run music groups. Musical education allows entire communities, not just students within a school, to connect with one another on the universal level of song.

Music allows a child to expand a part of themselves that is creative and relatively unnurtured when only studied in other subjects. Music acts as a freeing of the soul that cannot be fully developed through the other arts. While art, drama, musical theatre, wood working and more all offer benefits of their own, music is an education separate from all of these. The perfect synchronicity of playing in a band or orchestra, the beauty of singing a cappella, the ability to create song that transcends language and weaves a story entirely from pitch and tone. These are feats irreplicable with another education. To teach a child to play the guitar, the drums, the oboe, this is teaching a man to fish. It is a skill and a talent that they can cherish and grow throughout their life. A child can feel connected to music no matter their age. They can explore their thoughts and desires through song regardless of ethnicity, sex, and mental, physical, or emotional disabilities. A child who can play an instrument or sing is one who will never be without a voice. Expression is art. Music has just as much right to be classified as art as painting or drawing do. The preference to express oneself with an instrument rather than a paintbrush, while different, is not lesser and should not be treated as such. Without the option of both music and art a child may never know their true potential. Their music could be forever silenced to make room for art, for soccer, for something they may not truly believe in.

I have been a part of Island Ukuleles, a music program at Oak Bay High School for three years. The program finishes for students when they graduate. I have one year left. While revoking the funding of Island Ukuleles would not destroy the bonds I have made with my classmates or the knowledge I have learned and will cherish forever, it will deny future children the chance to love music as my bandmates and I do. To share the beauty of song with students and friends, elders of the community, other schools, and more. To learn that their fingers can make something complex and beautiful, to know they can rely on their voice to sing the stories they may be too afraid to speak aloud otherwise. Through Island Ukuleles I have discovered my own self worth; through music I am able to recognize the importance of who I am as a person. Playing the ukulele allows me to forget the trappings of my mind, my body, my situation. I can untether myself through song and simply exist. In music, there are no wrong notes, just some that fit better than others. I began teaching Little Ukers, the junior and elementary grade levels of the Island Ukulele program, two years ago as a volunteer. Music is more than just a connection to myself, it is a connection to the world around me. I pass along my knowledge to students as young as three and four who join the program in kindergarten. I find a home each Monday night that I get to participate in Island Ukuleles. My hope is that my students will have a home there for many years to come too.

When making the final decision, please consider not only the current year's students but all subsequent children who will be impacted by this choice. Music may not seem as important as other extracurriculars or core classes but it truly is. It ties together many aspects of foundation learning allowing for students to showcase and develop skills in academics while participating in music. It brings together people of all ages and from many walks of life. It allows students to find themselves when they otherwise may have felt lost. Music is life to so many people. While I understand that if the money does not come from the music programs, it must come from somewhere else, I must still beg you to save it, to let music continue to save me, to let music go on to save countless others as well.

With utmost sincerity,

Megan, a music student, a music teacher, a music lover, a musician

From: Melinda Jolley
To: Trustees; akmohareb@hotmail.com
Subject: Please do not cut music programs in SD61 schools: Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting tomorrow
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:37:24 PM

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Dear School Trustees and Superintendent,

Our son is just about to begin his education in Kindergarten in SD 61 this fall. Already he loves music and can get so much joy from it. The cuts you are proposing will have a lasting negative impact on our son and on the larger arts and culture scene in Victoria. Together as a family we watch the Symphony, we listen to local musicians. If they don't learn young, then our community will forever loose it's musical skill. Making music is a way to connect with community and it allows imagination and creativity to flourish. We need music more than ever. It is not optional, it is an essential part of our community.

We already have only a basic music program, we need to build on it, not cut it.

I trust you to keep music alive in our young students and community.

Melinda Jolley

From: Mercedes Calvert
To: Trustees; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Deb Whitten
Subject: Re: PLEASE do not cut funding to our music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:10:53 PM

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Addendum- this letter can be shared with whomever.
Thank you,
Mercedes Calvert

On Monday, April 12, 2021, 11:58:01 AM PDT, Mercedes Calvert wrote:

Dear School Trustees,

I have two boys, one in grade 7 (Monterey Middle School) and one in grade 9 (Oak Bay High School).Would my grade 9 student, who currently attends OBH, have decided to join Strings and the Orchestra if he hadn't started learning to play in grade 5? I can almost **guarantee** the answer would be **NO**. Would my 13 year old son decide to take up both violin and sax in high school, if he hadn't been given the opportunity in grade 5 and 6? Unlikely.

Late elementary and middle school years, as you will know if you are parents/grandparents, but even if you don't, you will remember from when you were a preteen, are the times when children are more willing and likely to try new things... by high school (in a normal year not fraught with the restrictions of a pandemic), friendships take precedence over most things, but once something is a routine/is already loved/enjoyed, those activities often continue... whether it is sports, music, theatre, arts... we all know, without an introduction to the cello, the sax, a violin in the early years, the uptake of these options in high school would be *so much less.*

My oldest son gets up at 6:30 am on Monday mornings (this is a kid who would love to sleep until 11 am each day, if given the opportunity) to attend his outside of the timetable strings class. And he stays late on Thursdays after a full day at school, to attend his orchestra class. He needs this- for his mental wellness, for brain growth, for enjoyment.

Are their families in our school district who could afford private lessons weekly? Certainly there are some. We are not one of those families. My sons, who both play instruments in their schools, would not be able to. Full stop. No access to music lessons. This is equity and privilege at play. Do not ignore

this point.

Also to mention the fact that there are so many passionate, brilliant and dedicated music teachers who would lose their jobs or have their changes significantly altered if this change occurs. Devastating.

This is such a stressful and difficult time for so many of us... the absolute last thing that I want to be doing right now, is researching and writing letters and answering surveys about why is it WRONG to take away something from our children, that is so loved, so important, and crucial to their education and brain development.
But I am.
Because I have to.
Because we can not protest in person, instruments in hand, outside of your building.
Because it seems immoral and shameful to take away one of the only pleasures that our kids even get at school these days.

Do the right thing.

Sincerely,
Mercedes Calvert
Parent, choir member, lover of music, Treasurer for the Monterey Music Parents Association

From: Merle
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence for April 13, 2021 board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:06:30 PM

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I speak to the matter of your board considering reducing the music programmes in your district. As the widow of a retired teacher from your district; the mother of a special needs child who so benefited from music training and as a student of music myself I beg that you not take away these programmes. I grew up in a district that had very little music programming and I craved music; however I found it left a deficit in my life not being able to have music training. There was no money in any of the familes where I grew up to do this privately. Secondly there is such powerful research out there about how formal music training assists students in just about every other subject they must
learn in our school. You will not be working in the best interest of your students by cutting these programmes. So please consider well and put the children first and stop cutting programmes for the most vulnerable of students whether that we low income or children with special needs.
Merle Campbell
Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: Michael Allison
To: Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell; Shelley Green; Ann Whiteaker; Rob Paynter; Ryan Painter; Elaine Leonard; Angie Hentze; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Diane Mcnally; Jordan Watters; Trustees
Subject: SD61 Music Funding Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:14:11 AM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Michael, and I am a community member and past SD61 student in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Michael Allison

From: Michele Pleasants
To: Trustees
Subject: I would like my email letter in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:44:17 PM

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Vote no to cut music from the school programs.
Michele Bigelow.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Mike and Mary Jane Teachman
To: Trustees
Subject: for inclusion at Board meeting on April 13, 2021
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:24:25 PM

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Dear all Trustees:

Please do not eliminate the teaching of various forms of music from school, especially middle school.

My daughter, who is now 17 and an accomplished cellist associated with the Victoria Conservatory of Music, struggled socially throughout middle school. She attended Lansdowne Middle School and participated in both the choir and instrumental programs there. The quality of teaching in both disciplines was exceptional and made a few difficult years bearable for her.

Her reaction to the proposed funding cuts was one of horror. She understands the universal experience of making and sharing music; for her, it's a fundamental right.

To quote her: "Most people never use all the math they learn in school, but everyone benefits for the rest of their lives in some way from their music classes."

Thank you,
Mary Jane Teachman

From: Mike Engelman Germain
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Please do not cut the music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:33:44 AM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Carli-Ann Engelman Germain, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Mike Engelman Germain

From: Mike Wyeth
To: Trustees
Subject: Please stop the cuts to music programs.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:40:21 PM

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Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full-time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Music education is not a "nice-to-have". It is one of the most fundamental aspects of human life. At 75, I'm still involved with a choir and we are still practicing during the pandemic. When we drop music education we are abandoning a key area of a child's mind. The cost to our community and society will be huge down the road.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.....

Mike Wyeth

PS Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

From: Moira Walker
To: Trustees
Subject: proposed music cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:36:32 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees, I am deeply troubled by information I have recently learned. I understand that to address a $7M deficit, Victoria School District 61 is proposing major cuts to its elementary & middle school music programs. These proposed cuts include the equivalent of over 9 full-time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district and changes to beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives.

Research has shown that musical training physically develops the part of the brain involved in processing language. There is little evidence that access to computers enhances brain functioning.

In addition, music teaches cooperation & discipline, develops memory, enhances imagination & intellectual curiosity. I challenge members of the School Board to look at the following BBC program: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43tqQhOTCgQ&ab_channel=arXter

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.
Sincerely, Moira Walker,

Molly Stewart Lawlor, Ph.D.

April 11, 2021

Attention:
Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools
Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent
School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61

I am writing in regards to the proposed funding cuts to Music Education in School District 61. As an educational psychologist, I feel it is important that decision-makers are aware of the ways in which music education serves as a protective factor in adolescent resilience that can ameliorate risk and negative outcomes for students during their late elementary and middle school years.

The benefits of music education have been well documented that include positive effects across multiple domains including academic, physical, social, and emotional well-being across child development. In addition to the abundance of evidence that supports the value of music education for students in general, I suggest that you also consider the significant role it provides specifically during the early adolescent developmental period.

Early adolescence, a developmental period that spans between the ages of nine and 14, is marked as a time in which individuals undergo myriad of changes across multiple domains. Few developmental periods are characterized by so many changes --pubertal, cognitive development, school transitions, peer relations, parent - adolescent relationships, and social role definitions. It is during this developmental period that behavioural and psychological problems may begin to emerge. For instance, adolescence is the peak time in development for the clinical onset of mental illness, and research suggests that 20% to 25% of adolescents are at risk for serious mental health, emotional, and behavioural problems.

Early adolescence is a transitional, or a turning point, in development. Hence, it is a window for both increased risk and increased opportunity for promoting successful development. The educational environment, and the opportunities it provides has a profound influence on adolescents' social, emotional, and academic well-being.

Decades of research point to the importance of creating educational environments that match the developmental needs of adolescents. In fact, students who participate in activities deemed extracurricular (including music) experience multiple protective benefits including higher levels of self-esteem, higher educational aspirations, higher academic ability and grades, lower

delinquency rates, and greater involvement in political and social activities as young adults. These students are also more bonded to school, are less likely to drop out and participate in delinquent activities, and report more friendships and less loneliness. Music education supports these outcomes in part by providing students with the opportunity to build positive relationships with other trusted adults, their music teachers, at a time when adolescents are seeking adult role models outside of the home. Early adolescents need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities.

In closing, I would like to reference the B.C. Ministry of Education's updated mandate to develop the educated citizen, in which, the definition includes "to develop an appreciation of the fine arts and an understanding of cultural heritage." Given the breadth of research that supports music education as an important component for positive human development, I implore you to protect music education for all students in SD61.

Please note that I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda.

Regards,

M. Lawlor

Molly Stewart Lawlor, Ph.D.

From: Molly Sullivan
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; educ.minister@gov.bc.ca; john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca; jennifer.whiteside.MLA@leg.bc.ca; rob.fleming.MLA@leg.bc.ca; grace.lore.MLA@leg.bc.ca; murray.rankin.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Cc: Jeff Weaver; Nathan Jacklin;
Subject: Music Education- Letter of Support
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:59:56 AM

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Dear Board of Trustees, Superintendent and Associate Superintendent, and elected officials,

My name is Molly Sullivan and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I was shocked and saddened to see the proposed changes in the 2021-2022 budget, cutting the equivalent of over 9 full-time music teaching contracts, impacting music education for every child and family in the district.

My sons first joined band in Grade 6 at Lansdowne Middle School. Music is an integral part of the culture at Lansdowne and my sons could not wait to be part of it.

For both of my sons, band was their favourite class throughout middle school; a beacon of light during what otherwise can be a very difficult three years.

Their teacher, Denver Rawson, is an exceptional educator. He had a major impact on both of my sons. He taught them the value of hard work and accomplishment, demonstrating that practice, effort and participation has value in band, school and life. Having a positive male role model at this time in their lives was vitally important. They did not receive the encouragement and interaction found in band in ANY other area of their middle school careers.

Both boys continued in band at Oak Bay High School until their graduations in 2019 and 2020. The safety and welcoming atmosphere in the band room, the companionship of others, the teachers' encouragement, and the sense of achievement will be with them for the rest of their lives.

Their teachers, Jeff Weaver and Nathan Jacklin (or, "Band Dads" as they are known to the kids) were there for my sons every day. Whether it be through bullying in grade 9, a break-up with a girlfriend, or during my cancer treatment, they were there for them no matter what. Jeff and Nathan pushed them to be better students, better citizens and better people.

Not only did my sons learn how to play a variety of instruments, they found a love of all kinds of music. Scholarly studies indicate music education positively impacts all areas of learning. It's not just about music.

Music education is the great equalizer. Kids can be anything they want to be in the music program. Everyone fits in, and everyone finds a home in the band/strings/choir rooms. My sons have both made lifelong friends through music, kids they may not otherwise have met given the size of the schools they attended.

As a music parent, I have also made lifelong friends. Through volunteering with the program at concerts, field trips, fundraisers and meetings, I have met the most wonderful people. As children go in to middle and high school, it can be very difficult to be involved but music education enables the entire family to be part of the school community.

Music education positively impacts the local community as well. Fundraising, performing in concerts, on the streets and at ceremonies like Remembrance Day, music students get to be part of the wider community.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

For our elected officials, I urge you to make education a priority. I would rather support the development of young minds than receive an ICBC rebate. Find the money to support our future.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Thank you
Molly Sullivan

From: NANCY
To: Trustees
Subject: Music in the schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:25:09 PM

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Superintendent and Trustees,

I am writing in response to news that music teaching in the schools is being cut.

Please include my letter in the correspondence at the next meeting of the trustees.

Please, do not make these cuts.

The importance of learning to read and to play music, both individually and in groups, and to understand what makes music, should be recognised by any competent education planner and school authority. To take music out of the curriculum is an ignorant and foolish cost-cutting measure. The importance of teaching music goes way beyond "connection", "community", "a sense of safety and belonging". Those things can be accomplished merely by playing sports in a team setting. Learning music is so much more.

I was fortunate to have good musical education at a very early age. Because I learned, when I was a child, to play and understand music, I have developed cognitive skills and abilities which have hugely impacted and enriched my life over the years, and these skills and abilities cannot be learned later as the brain ages. My brain is better because I learned music at an early age. This I know.

I have also been fortunate to meet some of the school music teachers in the Victoria region through my recent participation in community bands in the area. I am impressed with their ability to teach, lead, and challenge their students to learn and participate in music as an important part of the school curriculum. Their students will benefit, regardless of further paths in education and work/career choices.

Please, find other ways to deal with your budget problems. If needed, increase the taxes.

Respectfully submitted.

Nancy Leitch

April 12, 2021

Last night I heard the news of proposed cuts to SD 61 School music programs. I spent a great deal of time adding my comments to the survey, and 'starring' the comments -- after over 300 stars I decided to sign off as time on the computer was negatively affecting me.

All I can picture this morning after hearing that cuts to music programs in SD 61 are being considered, is Tom Ferris sitting in packed auditoriums and witnessing the culmination of months of disciplined effort by students of all socio economic backgrounds and cultural backgrounds working together to present the best of what they can produce for their teachers, parents, caregivers, grandparents, and each other. Have you been to a Lansdowne Middle School grade 8 graduation music concert after these hundreds of students have spent three years singing and playing together? I would assume not, or you could never consider the proposed cuts to the music program.

The majority of music students in my experience (my two children attended Lansdowne Middle School from 2012-2015) found themselves enriched by attending more than one music class. The first call for auditions for a "Men's Choir" in grade 6 saw 40 middle school boys turn up to "try out"!

I don't think I personally can begin to quantify the benefits of participating in a school music program, but I am confident that School Trustees have seen all of the research and experienced it in the faces of the students when they rest their bows, sing the final note, play that rush of the final orchestral, pop music, classical, rock etc. piece.

Both of my sons spent 3 years at Lansdowne and enthusiastically bounced out of bed for early morning rehearsals throughout their three years - choir, band, jazz band, vocal jazz, R & B. I know that the other components of their school day in no way matched the level of excitement and dedication that they had to their music teachers, and to the music program. A gift to parents of the highest order.

The boys are in 3rd year at the University of Waterloo (Math majors...is it true what they say about the correlation between success in academics and music education?!), and both played with the University of Waterloo Jazz band in first year (before heading home when the university closed in 2020). They still recall, with fondness, Mrs. Evans their 'first' choir teacher at Willows elementary, and they both played strings at Willows in the Grade 5 music strings program.

I could write paragraphs of what the Choir, Musical Theater, and Jazz Band meant to my boys as they navigated 'growing up' at Oak Bay High School. I believe that if students do not have an opportunity to begin their musical education in elementary school, and have a strong, vibrant and varied music program in middle school, then many of our kids will never experience the richness of caring adult 'music' mentors, life long friendships, the confidence that comes from practice and performance, and the lifelong presence of a 'song in their heart' to get them through the ups and downs of their lives.

Please, please, please, for the children whom you are entrusted to support, reconsider any and all cuts to the elementary, middle and high school music programs in our district!

While I re-read this letter, tears fill my eyes at the thought that other students coming through our district may be denied the opportunity to experience what my family experienced -- the greatest part of our elementary, middle and high school experience by far, and I sincerely hope that the Board of Trustees will listen to their constituents.

Thank you.

Nancy Mabey

From: Naomi
To: Trustees
Subject: Music in schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:49:41 PM

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Hello, I've heard about the upcoming potential cuts to the music education program in sd61. I find it especially sad that it targets musical education for children.

I've been through the elementary school and high school strings program myself in sd61 playing violin and viola. It was a defining skill in my life. I've made a lot of my long term friends through music and the program helped guide my choice in undergraduate degree at UVic and in my future career choices as well. Private lessons are expensive and elitist. It's harder to discover music as a child when relying on parents enrolling you or bringing you to music lessons. Some can't. They don't offer the group environment either to grow in team work and listening skills that group classes in school would have.

The best part about grade 4 strings was that it was a great equalizer. Everyone had to play and listen together. It was the one time I spoke to some classmates even at that age as kids start to already form groups and cliques. I've been working full time as a software developer for the last 12 years, and whenever any interview question has come up asking me about naming the best team I've been on and the qualities of this team, my thoughts always land on Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra and UVic Orchestra, both organisations I was only able to join because of sd61 elementary and high school strings programs.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

--
-Naomi Aro

From: Nathan McDonald
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Education is ESSENTIAL
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:58:15 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

"Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without"
-Confucius

Dear Board of Trustees and Superintendents of School District 61,

I was devastated to learn about the proposed cuts to Music Education in SD61 (found on page 26 of the Draft Budget). I strongly encourage you to find other ways to address the budget shortfall.

As I expect you are aware, there are an incredible number of scientific studies that support the value of Music/Art education in schools. This is not "new" knowledge; music is a fundamental way that we as humans communicate, and this is borne out in cultures and traditions across the globe. We live in a time when we are constantly inundated with negative information: issues surrounding the Pandemic, the Climate Crisis, intense Political Polarization, Economic disparity/uncertainty... the list is long. Music is a unifying force with the capacity to connect us, soothe our anxieties, and unify us as we desperately attempt to address the very real peril we find ourselves in as a species. To consider doing away with such a lifeline for young people is potentially disastrous, and will only hurt our community's efforts to address the many problems we *must* face *collectively*.

As a former member of the World Youth Choir (UNESCO Artist for Peace 1996-1998), I have seen first hand the capacity for music to unite people from all corners of the globe. Music breaks down barriers that we don't even know exist, and offers an avenue of communication that supersedes language, histories of violence, and fundamental disagreements.

As a parent of two small children (3 years and 6 months), and a long-time resident of the Oaklands neighbourhood, I would be personally devastated to need to seek out alternative learning arrangements should these cuts go through. While it may be possible to provide private musical instruction for my children, the group instruction and ensemble experience that school music offers is truly invaluable and irreplaceable - I dearly hope it may continue.

Sincerely,
Nathan David McDonald
baritone

From: Noelle Davis
To: Trustees
Subject: RE: SD61 Proposed Budget Concerns
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:50:42 PM

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We request the letter below be included in the board meeting agenda.
Thank you,
Noelle Davis
Braefoot Elementary School PAC Secretary

From: Noelle Davis
Sent: April 12, 2021 11:40 AM
To: trustees@sd61.bc.ca
Subject: SD61 Proposed Budget Concerns

To School District 61 Board of Trustees,

We are the Parents' Advisory Committee for Braefoot Elementary School in Victoria, BC. We are writing to you about the upcoming vote and our concerns regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

During inarguably the hardest school year in quite some time, proposing major cuts to our budget, and removing music program funding from virtually all of our school district's middle schools is unconscionable. According to the proposed budget slide on page 26, the SD61 School Board is removing 11.35 FTE music teachers, leaving 2.423 FTE.

For so many children, music strongly connects them to their school community. It's a highlight of their day and is so important to children's development. There's a proven and intrinsic link between music and math and reading achievement.

Music has such a huge impact on students' social and emotional state, as well as on their overall development. It has a profoundly positive impact on school and community culture. For most parents, concerts are the only time they're able to see their children interact in the school environment. There has been a great deal of research done on the impact of music on children's school achievement. At the end of this document, we have cited two of these studies.

A huge lasting concern from the pandemic is the mental health strain it is having on the kids. Nobody does math when they're sad or anxious. The arts fill that space. And it's not just about the learning of music as a skill- there's a camaraderie there that gives so many kids a place where they belong and feel safe and included. Music is one of the ways we can psychologically support children at school. Music is also a healthy form of expression for children and a real source of pride and joy for many.

The music teachers in our district are some of the most inspiring and passionate teachers (and people) we have ever met. By depriving the kids of these teachers and the musical experience they provide, we rob the children of a special connection that is so needed during these difficult times. When we cut these music teachers, we are cutting not just the music programs, but all the other enrichment these teachers bring to the lives of our children. As one of many examples we could

share, a music teacher at Cedar Hill Middle School, Mrs. Cindy Romphf, is doing live Zoom baking classes every weekend, that are open to all Cedar Hill students. These 2-3 hour sessions are very well attended by children from all cohorts. They are such a solace for the kids during these times of isolation and create a strong sense of unity.

We don't know what the world will look like next school year and with all the Covid variants, there's a good chance the world will not have returned back to normal. If the kids are still restricted from their regular lives, middle school music programs are one of the only extracurricular activities these students will have access to.

Looking toward the post pandemic future, public school music programs provide the chance for some kids to be exposed to music who otherwise may never have the opportunity. Our public schools are supposed to fill a mandate of equitable learning, and it should not be the case that only those who can afford it can access the world of music.

This sweeping decision should not be made lightly as it will have repercussions for many years to come. It is irresponsible to cut these programs without more investigation and consultation with the community. We need to understand the broad impact of removing access to music programs for middle schools before even considering this.

We strongly believe that we should not be making major cuts to our public schools at this time, and we should not be removing music from the middle schools in School District 61. Your own vision statement reads, "Each student within our world-class learning community has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations." We believe that a world class learning community would not close the door on an aspect of education that is so fundamental, inclusive, and is recognized as intrinsic to children's development as music.

Respectfully,

Braefoot Elementary School PAC

**

A 2016 study at the University of Southern California's Brain and Creativity Institute found that musical experiences in childhood can actually accelerate brain development, particularly in the areas of language acquisition and reading skills. According to the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation (NAMM Foundation), learning to play an instrument can improve mathematical learning and even increase SAT scores.

"Researchers, from the University of Vermont, have shown that musical training can lead to lower anxiety in children and help with emotional control, as well. Simply put, the research has shown that music can thicken the cortex, which is the decision making part of the brain. A thicker cortex allows for greater executive function and decision making, which can help children and teens formulate better decisions based on the data available to them. The development of the cortex happens more rapidly when children learn to play an instrument because they learn to better focus their attention, control their emotions and decrease childhood anxiety. The study examined brain scans of 236 children and noticed substantial differences. Along with a reduction in childhood anxiety, learning an instrument can also help make your child smarter and less likely to suffer from depression according to the study."

From: Norah Garyali
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence for the Board Meeting , Tuesday April 13
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:10:06 PM

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I am writing to request that the superintendent and all trustees vote No to cutting essential positions and training in music education for our students in School District 61.
Music is one of the highest gifts of human nature, as important as science, mathematics, or any other of our important qualities, and essential to our children's development.
I am asking all concerned to vote No to restricting elementary and middle school music programs so that all children may have have access to this critical experience in their development.
Yours truly,
Norah Garyali

Sent from my iPhone

From: Noreen Skoreyko
To: Trustees
Subject: correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13.
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:32:35 PM

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You are nuts, yep nuts (as in crazy) to even consider cutting music programs. I guess music is not that important if you want to produce a generation of really good data entry clerks. Think outside the box!
Regards,
Bruce Medd

From: Patricia Horwood
To: Trustees
Subject: URGENT!!!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:53:07 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include this letter in Tuesday night's meeting package. Thank you so much!

Dear devoted trustees of School District 61,

My name is Patricia Horwood and I am an aspiring music teacher and the daughter of Tina Horwood, a choir teacher at Oak Bay High School and the director of Island Ukuleles. I am writing regarding the proposed budget cuts to music in the district.

Growing up, I took advantage of every musical opportunity that was given to me. I started in the Island Ukuleles Little Ukers program in Kindergarten and continued in it all the way through to my high school graduation. In elementary school, not only did I have music class, but I also had the opportunity to join choir, grade 5 strings and participate in a musical. After that I was hooked. Every year I took advantage of all the musical opportunities that my schools had to offer; band, jazz band, choir, vocal jazz, strings, orchestra, conducting opportunities and more.

I want to ensure you all realize the damage that will be caused if you go through with your proposed budget cuts. Music is essential to the success of young students. Not every student can be an athlete or a math genius. How are you going to keep the kids in school that don't have a sports team to bond with or a science club to be a part of? For so many students, music is their community. A place where they feel comfortable just being themselves. A place where they go to forget about the stress and many pressures of maths and sciences. A place where people can come together, no matter how diverse they are and unite through a shared passion, music.

Music is a very unique and wonderful art. It has a way of making us all come together. It unites us. It inspires us. It brings us joy. Music educators are like music therapists for students. Music therapists are effective in helping people function, whether that is physically, emotionally, mentally or otherwise. This has been clinically proven as well as backed up by evidence based results. Music educators are able to provide students with the same support and assistance as music therapists and this is essential in their learning, especially since the majority of families would not be able to afford music therapy outside of the classroom. Musical opportunities within schools include these same benefits; an improved heart rate, reduced anxiety, stimulation of the brain and improved learning. How can you get rid of something that is scientifically proven to have so many benefits?

Firstly, I would like to address the proposed cut of all elementary school strings programs. These are young children you are talking about; Most of them do not know what they want to in the future. I still remember how excited all my classmates and I were about getting to join strings in Grade 5. We would get to learn a new instrument (that many of us would not have had the opportunity to try otherwise), read actual sheet music, play with our friends and show off our ending results. This class also allowed students to learn a greater level of responsibility as they would have to remember their instrument, music and equipment each week for strings. Many students continue their strings journey into their middle and high school years. I was one of them. Many students explore other music options in middle school, like band and choir.

Island Ukuleles has been around for 43 years, and your proposed budget cuts eliminate the pay

of the sole paid teacher, the director of the Island Ukuleles Tina Horwood. Now I may be a little bit biased towards how incredible my mom is, but I can also speak from personal experience as to how this program allows people to grow, not only as musicians but also as people. It is no exaggeration to say that Island Ukuleles changes student's lives, and here's why.

Island Ukuleles is so much more than a high-level performance ensemble. It provides students with a tight-knit community, opportunities to learn multiple instruments and musical theory, and leadership opportunities. Its repertoire includes pieces that span over a century from all over the world. This allows students to really broaden their musical horizons. It also allows them to learn a wide variety of instruments, including electric and upright bass, the drums, piano and vocal techniques. The Island Ukuleles A ensemble, ranging from students in grades 7-12 is highly performance based. They perform locally within schools, at retirement homes and for large district wide events as well as internationally, traveling to Hawaii, Panama and beyond. Most of the students in the A group also voluntarily teach for the Little Ukers program. As the director of the organization is the only staff member on district pay, the younger groups rely entirely on volunteer teachers. It says so much about the program that many alumni come back after graduation to voluntarily teach for Island Ukuleles. Everyone who went through this valuable program thinks it is such an important program that they are willing to volunteer their time to come in and ensure the continued success of the organization. Finally it provides a family for the students. A place where they can be their true authentic self, surrounded by people who celebrate their small successes just as much as their big ones. Music brings people together and there is no better example of this than Island Ukuleles.

I have always wanted to be a music educator. Ever since I walked through the music room door at Willows Elementary and met Mrs. Gail Evans, I wanted to be just like her. Talk about someone who goes above and beyond for music here in SD61! Mrs. Evans always made everyone feel welcome and could get even the most unenthusiastic of boys to enjoy music class. At Willows, all grades twos and threes did choir, however when it got to grades four and grades five, it was up to each individual student to decide whether they wanted to continue. Since Mrs. Evans put a love of singing and music in each of us through those two mandatory years of choir, almost everyone stayed in choir for their senior years probably close to 90%. By the time we were all graduating from elementary school, all students were so excited to branch out beyond choir and strings and join band.

I am a product of the incredibly successful music programs in School District 61. Upon graduating from high school, I was accepted into the University of Victoria's school of music and from there transferred to the top music school in BC and second in Canada, The University of British Columbia. I was never a private lesson student; I only ever received opportunities to play music in school. Where did I start this journey? The grade 5 strings program at Willows Elementary School. I played the viola in grade 5 strings, but when I moved to Lansdowne Middle School for Grade 6 I was asked to switch to the bass. I had enjoyed learning a tiny bit of bass through Island Ukuleles so I agreed. After that I never looked back. I had no idea back in grades 5 and 6 that I would go on to pursue music in University, I was far too young. I did not decide to apply to music school until Grade 12 when I was encouraged to do so by my high school band teacher, Jeff Weaver and one of my longest and earliest musical mentors, Melissa McKnight. If I had not had the opportunity of playing in elementary and middle school strings, I never would have had the opportunity to do a performance concentration on the double bass through university.

My request is that you reconsider cutting these essential music programs in the district. I want you to picture the faces of students that have nowhere to go to feel a sense of community and belonging. I want you to feel the anxiety and sadness of students that struggle with mental health and consider music their safe space. And lastly, I want you to think about the lasting impacts that these changes will have on students lives as I for one can truly say that I would not be where I am today without each and every musical opportunity that I had.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter!
All the best,
Patricia Horwood

From: Paul R Gully
To: Trustees
Subject: Letter to be considered as correspondence at School District 61 Trustees meeting April 13, 2021
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:49:13 PM

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As a parent and grandparent who believes that musical education is a critical aspect of a complete education, and whose grandchildren are all currently benefiting from elementary and middle school programs threatened by the proposed cuts, I am writing to urge all trustees and the Superintendent to vote no to the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school programs and help to maintain accessibility for all young people.

Paul Gully
Victoria, BC

From: Paul Rasmussen
To: Trustees
Subject: Please do not cut music programs in the Victoria School District
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:52:47 PM

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Dear SD61 Trustees,

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

I am a person who started playing music in a school program at age 11 and have continued to play music, enjoy music, and find music helpful and therapeutic for the rest of my life, even though I have never played music professionally. Most people who continue to play music throughout their life start out playing when they are school age. Music (and other artforms) can often be places where kids who don't fit in to the standard curriculum can find their footing and excel. It is something that reaches people in a way that nothing else can and can help people through life crises. Please don't take away music from our Victoria kids!

Sincerely,

- Paul Rasmussen

From: burns.stern@gmail.com
To: Trustees
Subject: Board Meeting Tuesday, April 13 - Please include in correspondence re: Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:00:45 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 School Board,

I write to convey my disappointment at the news of the proposed budget cuts to the Elementary and Middle School Music programs. I implore you to reconsider this very short-sighted option and vote NO to wholesale cuts to music. Music in the earlier grades is often the first real opportunity for many children to learn music. For many it carries over into a life-long love for music and song. It inspires them to pursue the skill and craft of learning instruments and voice. The teamwork, creativity and joy to be found in the expression and practice of music is a powerful thing which carries over into all parts of life. Denying these children this entrance into an important and amazing part of life at the most formative years of their learning is an enormous disservice to them and to our community. Especially in these very stressful and difficult times where we are all constrained we must give them ways to cope - music is a wonderful outlet and solace.

My son started with Strings in Elementary school and is now in Jazz Band at Reynolds. Music has given him an appreciation and love for Jazz, Funk, Soul, and other genres he may not have found. Music has given him confidence. It is an outlet from the other activities and stresses of school and life. It is an integral part of who he is.

Again, I must ask, do not do this. Find another way to reconcile your budget.

Thank you

Peter Stern

From: Reid Hepworth
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:11:04 PM

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Hello,
I received notice that School District 61 is looking to make drastic cuts to its music programs. As a musician and someone who has worked with children my entire adult life, I ask that you re-think this plan.
Music is vital to children's development. It has a way of reaching in and teaching children about themselves and the world around them. Music can be the voice they never had, the expression they never dared to share. Music has the power to heal and creates and celebrates community.
Cutting arts programs is detrimental to the well-being of our society...especially now. A balanced curriculum is one in which all aspects of the mind are engaged, cutting off the vital, creative mind is detrimental to the development of a child during their formative years. Please re-consider and please include my letter on correspondence at the next board meeting.

Yours truly,

Reid Hepworth

From: renata ruzzier
To: Trustees
Subject: Fw: DO NOT cut music programs!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:56:30 PM

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To the SD61 Trustees,

Please read the following email that I wrote urging the school district to NOT CUT our wonderful music program. **I would like my email included in the Board Meeting Agenda package at the April 13th meeting.**

Thank you
Renata Brandes

----- Forwarded Message -----
From:
To: "jwatters@sd61.bc.ca" <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; "dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca" <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; "nduncan@sd61.bc.ca" <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; "tferris@sd61.bc.ca" <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; "ahentze@sd61.bc.ca" <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; "eleonard@sd61.bc.ca" <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; "rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca" <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; "rpainter@sd61.bc.ca" <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; "awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca" <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; "sgreen@sd61.bc.ca" <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; "dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca" <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>; "hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca" <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>
Sent: Saturday, April 10, 2021, 06:55:48 p.m. PDT
Subject: DO NOT cut music programs!

To whom it may concern

I'm shocked and devastated to hear the news that so many music programs are being proposed to be cut from our children's education.

So many kids would never have the opportunity to seek out private lessons let alone have the opportunity to be exposed to so many varieties of music, instruments and musical opportunities.

We are always talking about mental health and equality. When a program as big and influential as MUSIC is proposed to be cut....it is obvious that mental health and equal opportunity is not of high importance. These will suffer without the music program. Our kids will suffer. Our community will suffer. Our future will suffer.

Music opportunities - string, band, choir - at our elementary and middle schools....provides both mental health and allows for those less wealthy the opportunity to discover their talents and passion for music.

Do not cut the music program. It's one of the best things SD61 has going.

Renata Brandes

From: RHYS HARRISON
To: Trustees
Subject: SD61 Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:41:56 PM

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Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

Learning about and making music is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. Music plays a role in the lives of almost all of us - it is an essential aspect of our culture.

In addition to planting the seeds of music appreciation that will influence them throughout their lives, children learn vital lessons about teamwork and empathy for others that our current pandemic crisis has demonstrated clearly are so critical.

This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs. Surely, alternative reductions can be found from administration, maintenance or capital budgets without directly impacting the education of our children.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting 'NO'.

Rhys Harrison - Music Lover & Supporter of U.Vic, Pacific Opera, Victoria Symphony, The Banff Centre & several local music ensembles

From: Richard and Luella Currie
To: Trustees
Cc: "jody pilling"
Subject: Re: Proposed cuts to funding for music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:08:00 PM

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To whom it may concern
As Treasurer of Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival Association, I am writing to express my concern over a proposal to budget cuts of $1.5 million that will significantly affect music programs.
I appreciate the need for prudent budget measure but fear that these cuts will severely restrict music programs that are important components of music education development particularly at the Middle and Elementary school level. These include cuts to Middle School Bands, Strings and Choir, and Elementary Strings.
I would encourage the board to consider the long term consequence of these cancellations. These reductions may be short sited in that they seriously comprise the ability of schools to sustain music programs in the Greater Victoria area. I fear the long term consequences of these actions in terms of developing an appreciation of music at an early age. Clearly, many students who have an aptitude and desire to pursue a music education will be unable to so.
I encourage the board to consider the implication of this decision and maintain needed funding to sustain existing music programs.
Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.
Sincerely
Richard Currie
Treasurer
Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival Association

From: Robin J. Miller
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence for next board meeting re: cuts to school music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:20:29 PM

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Dear SD61 Trustees:

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO. Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Robin J. Miller

From: Sandi Patterson
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to School District 61 music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:36:16 PM
Importance: High

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Good Afternoon:
You are proposing major cuts, in your current draft budget for School District 61, to elementary and middle school music programs. This proposal includes cutting the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives, including cuts to a long-term and valuable partnership with the Victoria Symphony (our Education concerts that reach over 10K students per year). The proposed cuts will have a lasting effect on arts and culture in Victoria. As a lover of music, I want to let you know that for me this is unacceptable. Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.
Thank you.

Sandi Patterson

From: sara
To: Trustees
Subject: School District 61 budget cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:33:55 PM

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Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves.

During this time when our community's wellbeing and the mental health of people of all ages are severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, this is the worst time to be cutting these important programs. Art and music and the opportunity to learn are vital to our children and youth. And as they grow and pursue their passion, they will be in the audiences and perhaps on stage. Wherever their education takes them, training in music will add to many aspects of their lives.

As a loyal supporter of the arts, including the Victoria Symphony and Pacific Opera Victoria, I can say that my own musical training as a school-aged child has had a lasting effect in my life.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Sincerely,

Sara Neely

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

From: sarah petrescu
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Proposed cuts to Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:06:23 PM

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Dear Trustees,

I am writing as a Victoria parent of a kindergartner, long-time supporter of the arts and former arts critic to express my concern regarding the proposal to gut SD61 music programs.

You are no doubt receiving a barrage of letters and calls from parents, teachers, students, musicians and community members alike who oppose these cuts -- as do I.

So, I will keep my note short to say, for the record (and please include in your budget package):

- We are more than a year into a global pandemic, which has taken so much from our kids already and further shifted them into an educational environment built around screens and education in isolation.
- We cannot use COVID-19 as an excuse to take music from them, to in one year decimate one of the only programs that is accessible, that unites and that brings kids into real space and time.
- We have all worked hard to ensure and commit to not leaving vulnerable people behind because of this pandemic.
- Gutting music programs in SD61 is a massive policy shift and reduction in the quality of education for public school children. It should not be approached as a budget exercise. This proposal is a failure of leadership, strategic planning and equitable community engagement.

I trust you will work together to make responsible decisions that reflect the best interests of students and the feedback from the Greater Victoria community.

Thank you,

Sarah Petrescu

From: Sarah Rhude
To: Trustees
Subject: Re: For Agenda Package for this Tuesday"s Special Board Meeting (April 12th, 2021)
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:58:02 AM

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For Agenda Package for Tuesday's Special Board Meeting (April 12th,2021)

Kwe',

My name is Sarah Rhude. I am of mixed ancestry, and through my mother I am Mi'kmaw, Anishinaebe. I have been a visitor in Lkwungen territory for 21 years and for 13 years I have worked for Indigenous Education in SD61 as an educator. For the last 7 years I have worked as the District Indigneous Art and Culture Facilitator though IED and I lay down my language, songs, and culture in this land with permission and through on-going relationships with local elders, knowledge keepers, and community.
I am writing to you to describe the effect that defunding the music program will have on the Indigenous Drumming program we have in our district. This program was created in partnership with both nations, and knowledge keepers/song composers from the three island nations. This program is very unique in terms of the depth of protocols and the permissions to sing songs in the western education system.
A quick history of the program- In 2016, The Greater Victoria Music Educators' Association (GVMEA), through Indigenous music teacher Jen Hill (Arbutus), contacted Nella Nelson who was the leader of Aboriginal Nations Education (ANED now IED) and myself to ask how they could drum/sing in their music programs. This is in order to meet the requirements of the Ministries new curriculum, in relation to weaving in Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The process of doing this is still on-going. Collaboration with Songhees elder Butch Dick (Education liaison for SD61 at the time) led us to understand and learn how to do this work in a good way. We were guided and told that music educators would first have to make/bring to life their own drums in order to understand the respect and responsibility that comes with taking care of a drum and eventually drumming and singing. For two years we held drum making workshops throughout the district, prioritizing music educators and Indigenous education staff and educators. These workshops were led by WSANEC elder Sainty George and his son Sandy, Bradley Dick from Songhees Nation, and myself/IED team. To date, A majority of music teachers, Indigenous staff, and now hundreds of school district teachers, admin and staff have made drums and learned these teachings.
As well, it was made obvious that we would need class sets of drums in order to accommodate us learning and drumming songs in the schools with youth. Therefore,

through grants, administrative support, and fundraising, schools were able to come up with the funds needed to offer drum making workshops with groups of students at various schools. The drums made in these workshops are used in drum groups, classrooms and school assemblies throughout the district. We currently have sets of drums in 32 schools, and we are still providing workshops for more schools. At the Indigenous Nations Education office, we have approximately 150 drums that teachers can borrow to use at schools that do not yet have them. This is over 800 drums. This work is on-going, dynamic and predominantly done in relationship with Indigenous educators/staff and music teachers.
In direct connection to the importance of middle school music, I have either run myself/IED colleagues (or in the process of establishing), or supported predominantly middle school music teachers and or Indigenous staff, drum circles, exploratories and or drum classes inside music curriculum in EVERY middle school in the district. It has been a strong feature to teach these groups to open/close assemblies with the songs they are taught, in order to deeply acknowledge the traditional territories we all teach on. These workshops, circles and teachings look different in every school, being reflexive to the needs of the schools, but in every case they instill deep teachings, gratitude, connection to the land and each other, and help them be brave together. Many cases Indigenous students will bring their non-Indigenous friends to the lunch hour drum groups, or during a music class students will state how calm, happy, grounded the drum makes them. This work is deeply connected to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commision as well as the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We have brought classes out into the community to drum at UVIC, The Save on Foods arena with the Victoria Orchestra, City of Victoria Orange Shirt Day and more. The depth of connection this program has created and still creates is unique to our school district, and has led to the creation of a First Nations Steering committee to receive a $200 000 SSRHC grant to bring together knowledge keepers and music teachers from around the province to discuss further how to do this work in a good way. We received an award of distinction from the BCMEA for this work. I can go on...

The responsibility of stewarding these 800 plus drums, the beautiful songs- which in our way are alive and needing to be sung and shared, and the teachings we have been given is shared between all involved, in particular the music teachers and IED. Music teachers have been taught how to do this in a good way. There will be a huge problem if they are all of a sudden gone, in terms of caring for the above. When you bring in Indigenous cultural ways of knowing and being into the western system, there is always worry that they can be mistreated, misunderstood, or appropriated. This program has had its bumps, as we always will when trying to straddle two worldviews in a system, but by and large it has been a source of pride for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and community. With the defunding of the music program you will put our whole story, our cultural drumming program, and the wellbeing of the drums in peril.

My hope is that I have communicated to you enough of an insight into the effect of your

decision in this regard that you will communicate and consult with myself, music educators and Indigenous Education department further before moving ahead with your funding decisions.

Msit No'kmaq/ All My Relations,

Sarah Rhude

On Sun, Apr 11, 2021 at 12:53 PM Jenn Treble wrote:

Dear SD61 Board or Trustees,

This is an incredibly difficult email to write. As a visitor on this territory for the last 15 years, I have always been proud to work as a music educator in this district. It breaks my heart to know that music is in jeopardy. Please understand that I am writing this letter from the lens of a devastated mother and music educator.

I am writing regarding "Draft 3: Savings and Reinvestment" in the proposed budget for 2021-2022, in other words the proposed decimation of music in School District 61. This proposal is no short of irresponsible. As a parent and educator I am outraged.

Middle school music programs provide a culture, a school within a school, like NO OTHER PROGRAM OR SUBJECT AREA. Middle school music is THE meeting place where children from ALL areas of the school, "high flying" or not, can grow together in a safe environment. It is where SAFE, non-competitive, team building occurs. Where children with developed and budding social skills can learn a new language and access social/emotional development (a perfect gift for this age group as you already know). Unlike much of current day education, music education is delivered **without** use of individual screens, requiring focus, and delayed gratification. It is one of the few safe places where students can remain connected with a group of students outside of their cohort and homeroom teachers from grades 6 through 8. These are not negotiable extras, we need music.

As a parent, I am absolutely gutted that my children will not get the opportunity to do music in middle school. Reducing a middle school music program to (beginning) band 8, particularly a program in my catchment like Cedar Hill Middle School, is a terrible joke. I have no aspirations that my children will go on to be professional musicians. But I am absolutely dreading, like all the parents on my street, the moment where I might have to

tell them that they will not be able to play an instrument or sing in a choir when they get to Cedar Hill. I expected our publicly funded education system to allow our kids access to the arts in a meaningful, experiential way. Experience and research tells us that middle school is a prime time for kids to try out new things. Waiting until grade 8, or high school, to begin music education is far too late. ANY PARENT OR MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATOR will tell you that grade 6, not grade "too cool to try" 8 is a perfect time to engage young minds in music!

Has there been any forethought into what the lack of music structure will do to middle school culture? What will serve as the new safe space for kids? This is not something that can be served by sport, or even clubs. We know that organizing something as sophisticated as a middle school music program would be a logistical nightmare. And who would lead it? An educator teaching what? Will it reach half or more of the school's population? Will it be a consistent person whose goal is to stay connected with my child from grade 6 to grade 8? Cedar Hill Middle School Music is THE thing that the kids on my street and in my neighbourhood already love participating in and what the little ones are looking forward to. Not getting cell phones. Do you know how rare that is by today's standards?

As a music educator with over 20 years of experience, I know the opportunity that middle school music plays during these incredibly important developmental years. **Middle school kids need places where taking risks on a DAILY basis is NORMALIZED**. The research on where children are currently spending their time (online, learning or for fun) and their level of anxiety (moderate to high at best) begs us in education to keep music. It is the place where we teach children that regardless of our abilities, we can work toward a common goal. Where it's okay to lead, or support. Children who are gifted, high flying, are dealing with changing or broken homes, mental health challenges, children who are athletes, living in poverty, are disconnected academically, or are just "regular" (I have worked with kids in all of these situations) exist in a safe space to learn together. THIS IS MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC AND OUR KIDS DESERVE IT.

Carrying out the proposed budget of removing middle school music will effectively wipe out music in our school district and rob future generations in Greater Victoria. You cannot replace what exists now with a portion of funding and say that you are still offering music education. That is dishonest. By removing middle school music the district is saying that you do not value supporting children during this time, and beyond. You are contributing to a future that denies access to social/emotional wellness, to delayed gratification, and appreciation of the arts as a society.

I know that this is not a one person decision. I know that it is made by the group. Whatever decision the group decides to make, I hope that each can own it, because parents are not likely soon to forget it.

Thank you for your time,

Jennifer Treble

From: Seoyoon Lee
To: Trustees
Subject: SD61 Music Budget Cuts for April 13th"s Board Meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:33:30 PM

To the valued trustees of the Greater Victoria School District No.61,

Hello. My name is Seoyoon Lee and I am currently a Grade 12 student attending Oak Bay High School. I am writing you this email to voice my concerns about the proposed budget plan for SD61 next year.

I believe cutting a majority of middle school music programs and the elementary string programs will be detrimental to the students, family, and the community.

Over the years, I have been an avid member of the Fine Arts program at Oak Bay High School as well as Monterey Middle School and Willows Elementary School. When I first immigrated to Canada in Grade 4, the Willow's choir program was one of the first places that made me feel belong in a new country with a different language and cultural perspectives from my own. To me, music was able to communicate the meaning of community before the English language and it has shaped the rest of my educational career.

In middle school, I've met so many wonderful people through the various music programs offered at the school. So many of them remain my closest friends and the most kind-hearted people I've ever had the fortune of encountering. The exposure to a band, strings, and choir in middle school helped me provide a foundation for music I never gained with my private classical piano lessons. I was fortunate enough to complete my studies in classical piano and gained a performance diploma last year but when I think of music, my achievements in piano is not the one my mind jumps to. It thinks to the community and home I have found through the school's music programs.

Furthermore, I have often found an escape from other aspects of my life through the Fine Arts program. Music helped me go through depression during middle school as it was often the only reason I looked forward to going to school. It acted as an emotional and mental support for me and I know it also had a profound influence on the happiness of my peers. I believe music can continue to provide support for students when they may be feeling overwhelmed with life at or outside of school.

As I head to university this coming September, I am hoping to pursue a minor in vocal music. The only exposure I've had to vocal music is through the choir programs at my schools and they were such a positive impact on my identity that it has inspired me to pursue further education in the area. The desire to pursue music in post-secondary was also inspired by so many wonderful music teachers who nurtured the students and programs with love. I would be absolutely devastated if they lost their positions in the district and didn't get to do what they love anymore.

If the proposed budget cuts pass, the younger students in the future years will not have the same exposure that I had to music which could be the destined path for them when they grow up. They would be deprived of chances to make friends in the community and connections to teachers that get to care for them outside of an academic setting. I know I am graduating this June but I feel it is my duty as a student who benefited so much from the music program to

fight for it to the best of my abilities. I also know that if the same proposal was made years ago when I was in elementary school, the students would have spoken for the future of my peers and the students would continue to do so no matter how many years down the road a similar threat was made to the music program.

I plead you to please reconsider the proposed budget cuts in order to provide a future for students with a world full of love and joy.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my email.

Sincerely,

Seoyoon Lee

From: Sheila Linder
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd: Essential Role of Music in the Life of Victoria Children
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:18:56 PM

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Please include my letter below in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Many thanks

Dr. Sheila Linder

Begin forwarded message:

From: Sheila Linder <>
Subject: Essential Role of Music in the Life of Victoria Children
Date: April 12, 2021 at 2:15:47 PM PDT
To: trustees@sd61.bc.ca

Dear School Trustees,

Our children have suffered immensely with the months' long isolation required to combat the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Many are withdrawn, depressed, even suicidal. They have all suffered greatly from the lack of social contact with their peers. They need healing.

Not all children are "into" sports. For this group, music is an essential mode of communication and source of joy. If we have money for the football team, we need to also find it for music education.
I know from personal experience, there is nothing like playing in an orchestra and together "making music". You are not socially isolated. Rather, you are an integral part of a whole where your contribution is essential.

Be imaginative! Come up with novel, new ways of obtaining money. It is the coward's answer to just say "No".

Dr. Sheila Linder

From: Shirley Routliffe
To: Trustees
Subject: Music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:30:07 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Several years ago I had a stepdaughter first in an elementary school and then in a middle school music program.Participation in those programs helped to develop her self-esteem and gave her pride in her growing abilities.She continues to benefit from her involvement in the school music programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO

Sincerely,

Shirley Routliffe

Please include my letter in the correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Stephanie Khoury
To: Trustees
Subject: Music in the schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:52:17 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

(Please include in the board meeting agenda package)

Dear members of the board,

I was terribly saddened and disappointed that the proposed cuts to music would even be a consideration. As a music educator with a PhD in music education from McGill, I can advise you without hesitation of the numerous benefits that our middle school music programs have for our children. In a time in which their mental health is a growing concern, cutting music is the absolute wrong course of action.

I implore you to remove all cuts to music from the budget proposal.

Thank you,
Dr. Stephanie Khoury

Sent from my iPhone

From: Steven Cramaro
To: Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell; Trustees; Deb Whitten; Colin Roberts
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts for the 21/22 Budget
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:07:18 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Steven Cramaro and I am a Music Educator in The Greater Victoria School District. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

As an music educator I see the positive benefits of music education on a daily basis within my students. For many of them it is their safe haven in the school. The effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic have taken a great toll on many, but it in my music classes that my students have had the chance and ability to let go for a short while and deal with their emotions through their music making.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide.

Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Steven Cramaro
Music Educator

From: Susan Byrne
To: Trustees
Subject: To be included in tuesday april 13 board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:43:19 PM

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Music programs provide places where children can build self confidence and experience what it means to contribute to and be a part of a team.

PLEASE consider continuing to provide these band experiences for our kids. Waiting to experience a musical instrument until grade 8 means that band now becomes an elite experience in high school; only those with private lessons would realistically be able to participate.

Susan Byrne

Sent from my iPhone

From: Susan Howard
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to School Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:52:22 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Trustees of SD61,

Shame on you! There should be no cuts to elementary and middle school music programs in SD61 public schools. As a lover of the arts, including music, I strongly believe that music enriches our lives, provides children and youth with discipline, team work, a sense of safety and belonging, and enhances their active young lives. Children who participate in school music programs are the future audiences of the performing arts – concerts, plays and dance presentations. School music programs are valued to the young participants, their families and the community. Cutting these programs is a mistake. Don't do it.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.
Susan K.E. Howard
Victoria, BC

April 12, 2021

Greater Victoria School District No. 61
556 Boleskine Rd, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

Dear School Trustees and Superintendents,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed budget. While I sympathize with the difficulty of creating a balanced budget, this cannot be done at the expense of the children you've been entrusted as elected officials to do your best for.

The number one thing that must be acknowledged and supported is that every child is unique.

Every day children are supported in our schools through gifted programs and by educational assistants. As it is, the resources are too thin to meet the needs. The proposed budget eliminates much of this support when it should be increased.

Music and the arts should never be considered extras to be eliminated first. They should never be reserved solely for those that can afford private lessons. The benefits of the arts have been proven to help in many ways across our lives. From our mental health to communication to problem solving.

The music program at Arbutus Global Middle School where my son attends is not only robust and varied but award winning. My son is in band and strings and has learned more than music... he's learned about collaboration, teamwork, and perseverance. The proposed budget cuts eliminate the entire program. This would be devastating to the school community.

Again, to reiterate my first point - every child is different. Among the future doctors and engineers are the future musicians and artists. When we introduce music and art to all children we open up futures.

Remember during this pandemic, while we relied on science for solutions, we overwhelmingly turned to the Arts for our mental health. We sang from balconies, we joined our communities for online music and comedy. We watched opera from the comfort of our living rooms. The future of our artists is in your hands as you decide whether they are worthy of being introduced to the Arts.

Yours truly,
Suzi Smart and Michael Evans

From: Syd Bulman-Fleming
To: Trustees
Subject: Fw: Please vote AGAINST music program funding cuts...
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:15:38 PM

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Syd Bulman-Fleming, PhD
Victoria, BC

Professor of Mathematics (Emeritus), Wilfrid Laurier University
President, Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra Society

From: Syd Bulman-Fleming
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:57 PM
To: jwatters@sd61.bc.ca <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; nduncan@sd61.bc.ca <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; tferris@sd61.bc.ca <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; tferris@sd61.bc.ca <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; ahentze@sd61.bc.ca <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; eleonard@sd61.bc.ca <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; rpainter@sd61.bc.ca <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc: sgreen@sd61.bc.ca <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Please vote AGAINST music program funding cuts...

Dear Trustees Watters, McNally, Duncan, Ferris, Hentze, Leonard, Painter, Paynter, Whiteaker, Superintendent Green, and Associate Superintendent Caldwell:

I am urging you most sincerely to withdraw any consideration of decreasing funding to Elementary and Middle School music programs (band, strings, ukulele, choir...).

At all times, but especially now in these trying times, young people need something to look forward to in their routines - the evidence is overwhelming that music programs provide just what is needed. In addition, making music together gives a wonderful opportunity to learn how cooperation can lead to spectacular outcomes. Moreover, the discipline, patience and precision needed to learn to master a musical instrument pay huge dividends in any number

of later, non-musical pursuits. (I speak as a retired Mathematics professor and a life-long musician.)

Please don't deny our children these once-in-a-lifetime opportunities.

(Please ensure that my letter is included in the Agenda Package for the upcoming Trustees' Meeting.)

Thank you in advance for carefully considering your pending actions: they could have vital consequences for many young people and for our culture in general.

Yours sincerely,

Syd Bulman-Fleming, PhD, ARCT
Victoria, BC

President, Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra Society
Professor of Mathematics (Emeritus), Wilfrid Laurier University

From: Tallulah Tam
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep music programs alive!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:28:47 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Sincerely,
Tallulah Tam

Lansdowne Middle School Alumni
Grade 10 student at Glenlyon Norfolk School, Victoria

From: Tara Nargang
To: Trustees
Subject: Feedback on budget changes
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:26:59 PM
Attachments: image001.png

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to you as a **parent** of a Vic High Graduate and a student at Reynolds. As well, I was a **Youth and Family Counsellor** at SJ Willis, Cedar Hill Middle School and Victoria High School.

When the province committed themselves to a more evolved social-emotional learning curriculum that would allow students to grow in all areas, I was thrilled. At the time this curriculum was announced and the roll out started, I was presenting to teachers as a contractor for MCFD and Anxiety Canada. We knew the research pointed towards **school connectivity as a huge protective factor**.

I worked in a middle school, where many in the field noted over and over that Grades 6 – 8 are some of the toughest transformative years. These 3 grades are together in one building with little to no room for natural mentorship. I saw how crucial it was to have something that connects kids to their school. None of this should be a surprise to you working in the field you are working in. It's obvious that not all kids connect to academics or sports. Thank goodness for the arts, in all its forms. It transforms lives and changes trajectories and I say that with no exaggeration.

My daughters have had their own individual experiences in school. My youngest found middle school to be a place where she couldn't keep up academically. There were serious issues with late immersion for that particular cohort (noted by the principal himself) and many slipped through the cracks. Music for my daughter was her community, her confidence builder and her connection to teachers who understood her strengths. Thank goodness!!! I can't imagine how she would have fared with the experience of struggling at French immersion, during her middle school years with little music programming. The music programs bring together such a broad spectrum of kids and they have the opportunity to truly bond. They sometimes call themselves the Musical Dorks or misfits. There is:

- room for them to be themselves
- learn skills and learn something from complete beginners
- shine on stage, be appreciated by community
- find their different strengths
- shape their future outside of academics and consider different post secondary options
- learn discipline and trust themselves
- work as team and create community
- appreciate art outside of the onslaught of screens/social media
- express themselves outside of risky behaviours

This proposal to cut music programming by this much is shocking to me. My social media blew up when it was announced, from families all around the city, and not just 'music kids'. I know some of

the kids it will affect and your district might save money short term, but you will definitely be paying in other ways. Do you know how many hours of belonging, support and engagement music provides for kids who will need some other supports? We know that the steps to getting more counsellors are huge and likely not increasing anytime soon.

Please think ahead with this. You are affecting young people for **years to come**.

With respect,

Tara Nargang

FRPBC_logo-rgb

Tara Nargang | Provincial Director
She/her
Family Resource Programs of BC (FRP-BC)
e:
t:
www.frpbc.ca | Facebook | Twitter

Acknowledging the Lekwungen People, traditional keepers of this land.

From: Terence Tam
To: Trustees
Subject: Music and the Arts are ESSENTIAL education for young people
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 5:22:36 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

Arts and culture are an essential part of the fabric of learned and advanced civilizations and societies. Canadians are lucky and proud to able to say they a part of this type of society. Arts and culture are not expendable. Arts and culture have a huge impact on our economy and an even greater impact on our intellectual and spiritual existence. Without great art, there cannot be a great society. Early education in the arts leads to better outcomes in all aspects of education, including maths, sciences, languages and political sciences.

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

In addition, as we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Yours sincerely,

Terence Tam

Concertmaster, Victoria Symphony

Emergency Physician, Saanich Peninsula Hospital

From: Lady In Bloom
To: Trustees
Subject: No to Removing Early Music Programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:21:53 PM

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To the trustees:

Music education is vital to the well being of children and adults.

Please do not remove elementary and middle school music programs from your budget.

Especially at this time of Covid, mental and emotional benefits of music on the brain have proven that music maintains healthy cognitive and emotional health that contributes to the well being of a child and the community.

Please include this correspondence in your meeting on April 13th.

Thank you,

You're truly,

Teresa D. Cuomo
Musician, Songwriter

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: The Crawbirds
To: Trustees
Subject: Don"t cut music!
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:53:20 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Dear School Board Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern with your plan to dramatically cut music programming from elementary and middle schools in SD61. Music was a huge part of my own school life. It anchored me and gave me a sense of belonging in what might otherwise have been a difficult transitional time. It instilled in me a life-long love of music, but it also did so much more than that.

My oldest daughter is in Grade 8, and I see in myself in her. Although generally a night now, she happily gets up at 6:30am three days a week to be at school at 7:40 for band rehearsals. It is her favourite part of the day, hands down. Music has brought her joy and confidence, a sense of responsibility (to her bandmates), and so much more. It has also helped her academically (e.g. learning fractions) and has developed a sense of beauty and creativity in her that will last a lifetime. When I told her about the budget cuts and the potential loss of the music programs, she immediately went off and wrote her own letter to you, which I hope you will also receive. In short, she was horrified.

It makes me incredibly sad to think that my youngest daughter (currently in Grade 5) will not have the same opportunities my oldest daughter has had. She has been planning what instrument she will play for months already, so excited to finally be able to play in band like her sister.

I hope you will find other ways to cut the budget. I also hope you will reach out to the public for help, especially if advocacy work is needed - there are thousands of kids and parents willing to stand up for music and do whatever it takes to make sure it remains a key part of elementary and middle school programming.

Thank you for your time,

Sonya (parents of two kids, 13 and 10)

From: rickandtiffwhyte
To: Trustees
Subject: Letter for board meeting April 13th
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:10:33 PM

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Hello.

As a parent of a child who attends SD61, I am opposed to cutting the music program. So many programs are cut that help educate our children because of money. Make cuts elsewhere. We don't see the Superintendent making wage cuts to themself, or other people who sit at the board office making any cuts. Stop ordering food for meetings, stop having expenses that are not necessary. Why don't cuts start to happen at these locations first? Our kids are the future. Why should they lose something so valuable in so many ways? I vote NO. As a person who is studying for my BA in Child and Youth Mental health, I feel that before you make the final decision to take this program away, you need to go and talk with the kids and find out what it does for them. For some, it is a release from stressful home life, being bullied, or even a place they feel accepted. Stop looking at the money and start looking at the bigger picture of what these cuts do to the children.

Thank you,

Tiffany and Rick

The successful person will profit from their mistakes and try again in a different way.

-Dale Carnegie

From: Tim Rendell
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include this letter (email) in correspondence at the next board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:21:09 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 Trustees;

Please include this letter (email) in correspondence at the next board meeting.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to any action by the SD62 Trustees to reduce or cut the elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts would have a long-lasting and negative impact on the development and education of our children.
I believe it that all children should be provided with access to the proven benefits that a music education provides.
Please reconsider and decide against any proposed cuts to restrict or reduce music programs for elementary and middle school programs.
Yours truly
Tim Rendell

From: Timothy Croft
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed Music Program Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:24:26 PM

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PLEASE INCLUDE MY LETTER IN CORRESPONDENCE AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

Good day,

As a parent of two SD62 students and a music educator myself; it saddens me to hear the district is considering cutting middle school music programs.
Music programs are so important to the well being and social emotional learning of the students of SD61.
BC, and Victoria itself has some of the strongest music programs in the country. These proposed cuts would destroy this long established tradition.

Proposing that students simply "skip" music for grades 6-7-8 is frankly, ridiculous. If students were learning French would you say: "skip French for grades 6-7-8, you'll be able to pick it up in grade 9, no problem", of course not! Would you do so with Math? Or English? Or Socials? Well music IS math, music IS language, music IS socials.

To think students could skip three years in a subject and "jump-right in" in high school is wrong. Music, specifically, is a sequence of lessons and skills that are built over time. Taking three years off will destroy the skills learned in elementary music and set the students up for frustrating years in high school. This will likely result in less students being interested in high school music as they will be lacking the skills from not having learned them in middle school. The end result will be subpar programs and eventually a loss of the programs all together.
No, this is not catastrophizing. This is the logical end to what you are proposing by making these cuts. One needs only look to Bob Rea's Ontario in the 1990's to see examples of this seed (cuts) baring fruit (end of music programs).

Why not cut sports? Most, if not all, students will all learn to kick a ball, whether they do it in PE or not.
The majority of students do not have the opportunity to learn music and specifically, band instruments, in any other place BUT middle school. The threat to take away this opportunity is very, very, upsetting.

As a parent, a musician, a teacher and a taxpayer, I am opposed to these proposed cuts.

Thank-you
Tim Croft, B.Ed., B.Mus., M.Mus.
Faculty, Victoria Conservatory of Music
Music Teacher, SD62

From: Timothy Vernon
To: Trustees
Cc: glitwin; Ian Rye; Ereca Hassell; Abi Omotoso; Joey Pietraroja; Kim Bartczak; Robert Holliston
Subject: Proposed cuts to music in schools
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 3:56:58 PM

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Please include this email in 'correspondence' at the next Board meeting.

Times are tough, the future uncertain, and the pressure considerable to manage budgets intelligently. Given all this, your announced intention to reduce the already relatively meager resources devoted to music instruction in schools is ill-advised at best, barbarous at worst.

The education and social benefits of a rich cultural life should be self-exlplanatory. I would however stress, and exhort you to take into account, the numerous studies devoted to the now universally recognized benefits of musical experience on the developing brain. Here are some of the most readily available:

Children's brains develop faster with music training - USC News

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2307/3399572?journalCode=mejc

https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=zmbbH8uHuy0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=music+and+brain+development&ots=APav6DTqDL&sig=Tir-Nq7s-Urh8x_xbjS_Yl9R84I#v=onepage&q=music%20and%20brain%20development&f=false

https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/music-is-an-important-ingredient-for-child-development-and-parent-child-relationships/#gs.y2nhmx

https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/music-and-the-child/chapter/chapter-7/

https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnins.2013.00279/full

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30102752/

I could append many more, but hope you will read at least three of the above before casting a deciding vote on this issue. I should welcome a similar case being made - with similar serious research - for any other subject in the curriculum. Outrageous as that may seem, please understand that the neuronal development of a child's brain, which music is now seen to

enhance considerably, affects all aspects of learning and memory regardless of subject.

Do not take lightly what amounts to a serious deprivation - a developmental handicap - that would be involved in removing music from the schools in Victoria. It may seem that I have a special interest in this, and I do - not as a musician, but as a father of four, grandfather of three.

Farmers have long understood that cows produce more milk - and even wheat bigger grain - if exposed to Bach or Mozart (yes, in this case older rep wins). Informed critical thinking will bring you to better solutions than simply cutting something known in so many ways to be so beneficial.

Timothy Vernon, CM,LLD,DMus
Founding Artistic Director,
Pacific Opera Victoria

From: Ting Liu
To: Trustees
Subject: Say NO! to cut music program
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:32:24 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear officer,

I heard a bad news tonight that School District 61 is proposing major cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs. I believe the music programs play an important role in our school education. The transferable life skills that music education helps to develop are what powers our youth to become the creative thinkers and leaders we need in every profession. My son and daughter both enjoy the music programs very much at school. So I hope School District 61 can keep maintaining music programs in elementary and middle school programs!

I would like my email letter in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13.

Thanks,
Ting Liu

From: TJ Schur
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Programming must stay
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 2:47:43 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Trustees,

Please do not cut music programming. Band, strings and other music programs are important for children to connect with each other, connect with math, science and social academic programs, and enhance their teamwork, coordination, and abilities for self-control. Music programs impacted me as child and an adult; my band teacher was my hero. Music has made the transition to middle school a joy and music is link to normalcy during COVID for my children; today's band teachers are heros.

Find another way. Music must stay.

Please include my **email in the Board Meeting Agenda package for their meeting on April 13th 2021.**

Parent and former Band kid (French horn, sax, trumpet)
TJ Schur (children in Grade 3 and Grade 8)

From: Trevor Hoy
To: Trustees
Subject: Re: Proposed Cuts to SD61 music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:54:05 PM

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Please include my remarks in the Board agenda meeting package

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I am writing to ask you to reconsider your proposal to make budget cuts to music programs in SD61. I fear that such cuts would be detrimental to both the education and well-being of students in the district, and to cultural life in Victoria. I did not study in SD61, but was fortunate to attend schools (Dunsmuir Middle School and Belmont Secondary in SD62) that offered excellent music programs, and to grow up in a city that accorded so much value to the arts—for without the support of both the school board and the local community, such an education would have been impossible. From my own experience, I can attest to the value that music classes contribute to students' lives that extend beyond academic performance. They teach teamwork, help to instill a sense of confidence at an insecure time in one's life, allow friendships to form, and for many provide a safe space and an invaluable support network—for me at least, my high school music program felt more like an extended family, an environment that would have been impossible to replicate in any other class setting.

Too often is music seen as either an extra-curricular hobby, of secondary importance to the core subjects taught in school, or as a pursuit only for those wishing to become professional performers. Yet this binary view of music education both ignores the ways in which it enriches students' lives for the reasons I have outlined above, and is wholly unrepresentative of reality. Needless to say that many professional musicians first got their start in their school's music program, but I would wager that for many of those who work behind the scenes—managers, producers, recording technicians, artistic directors—music classes were also the first step towards a rewarding career. If I may use myself as an example, I first discovered my deep passion for music when I started band in grade 7—precisely where you propose to make cuts to the music programs in SD61. The passion that was first ignited in that band class led to a degree in music from the University of Victoria, and then to positions in the administrations of music organizations in Montreal—first at the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and currently at Bourgie Hall at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts—where I consider myself extremely fortunate to be part of the expansive cultural offering in this city. My colleagues and I are not professional musicians, but many of us have a background in music, and it is our love

for this art form that motivates our work and helps us to function together as a team; and without motivated and educated staff running venues, where are musicians supposed to perform? Furthermore, I have no doubt that for many audience members, music class was the debut of what became a lifelong interest.

Math and science are important to a student's education and development, but so is music. We are not computers, but human beings: social creatures with a creative impulse who, long before we had developed algebra or quantum theory, were creating rhythms and melodies with hollowed-out logs and bone flutes, and using this as a tool for social bonding . Too often are the arts, and the educators that teach artistic disciplines, taken for granted; and yet, the reasons I have mentioned above demonstrate the many ways in which music enriches our lives and is necessary to the functioning of a healthy society. The past year has been immensely difficult for the music profession, and yet for many it is music that has made it easier to navigate a world turned completely on its head. If anything, we will need it more than ever once we emerge from this pandemic, and now is not the time to be cutting music programs. I stand with the teachers of SD61 in their fight against these proposed cuts, and I sincerely hope that you will carefully consider the impact of such a decision.

Respectfully yours,

Trevor Hoy
Concert Programmes Manager
Bourgie Hall
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

From: Victoria Lougheed
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Programs and Special Needs Services are VITAL to Children"s mental health and brain development
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:51:25 PM

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Dear Trustees,

I would like my email to be included in the Board Meeting Agenda package for their meeting on April 13th 2021

I'm sure you've been inundated with letters, emails and phone calls about the impending budget cuts. As a parent of two children in middle school, I am adding my plea to the list of correspondence.

1. KEEP MUSIC PROGRAMMING - My son is in Strings at Shoreline School. Strings has brought him out of his shell and helped him overcome the depression he experienced at the start of COVID when schools were shuttered due to the shelter in place order. That impacted him in a massive way, and it was through music education that he began to find himself again. Strings, and learning the violin, allowed my son to connect with his emotions, to find ways to express himself and to become part of a group striving towards the same goal. While group goals can be achieved through sports programs in schools, my son is decidedly NOT a sporty kid. Music was the avenue he found for that kind of group participation and it has served him well.

Taking his Strings class and performance opportunities away now would be a second hit for him within a year, and I don't feel strongly that he will be able to weather it well. Through learning music, reading the staff, and playing an instrument, he's built stronger connections to his peers, felt part of something bigger than himself, and learned about the power music has to speak to our souls.

Providing access to music education takes the burden from low income families who cannot pay for instruments or lessons independently for their children. Music and Arts are a central part of our culture and as a society we all suffer when these programs are cut from schools.

2. INCREASE EA POSITIONS / SPECIAL NEEDS FUNDING My daughter is Special Needs - she is Autistic - and requires the support of Education Assistant to be able to navigate her classes, assignments and get through the school day. She has the right to the same quality of education as her peers. She needs to be properly accommodated in order to achieve that same level of education. SD61 already has a shortage of EAs and EA positions. It has been difficult in past years to ensure my daughter has the resources she needs to succeed in school and get through her day successfully.

I know money is tight. I experience this as a parent of 2 kids, trying desperately to pay all my own bills on a monthly basis. But we must ensure that we are looking to the future of society and play the long game. That includes meaningful inclusion for kids with Special Needs and keeping music education central to every child's school experience.

Thanks so much for reading my email.

Victoria Lougheed, mother to 11 year old son in Strings, and 15 year old daughter with Special Needs

--

Victoria Lougheed

From: Victoria Parker-Poitras
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed budget cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:56:37 AM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Victoria Parker-Poitras, and I am a community member in Chilliwack, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Victoria Parker-Poitras

From: Viviana H
To: Trustees
Subject: SD61 Middle School Music Program Budget Cuts—Please include in correspondence at next board meeting
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 8:19:49 PM

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Good evening,

I read with concern about the proposed budget cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs. The arts are already an area that is generally underfunded and receives less support and acknowledgment than it deserves, and further cuts will endanger students' abilities to have access to basic musical training in their early years.

Music (and other performing arts) have been shown to support social and cognitive development and help with mental health and developmental issues. Access to adequate training and tools (such as instructors and instruments) is already prohibitively expensive for many low- and middle-income families if not offered through school or community programmes. Further slashing these funding will widen this gap. This despite the fact that music group classes are especially useful for marginalised children and youth.

In addition to the clear negative impact of (even more) reduced funding, it also comes as a blow to artists and musicians - during the past year, consumption of art forms (film, music, literature, etc.) has been an important way of coping with the social and physical isolation. Even people who do not participate actively in the arts need the arts to survive, and an excellent way to instill an interest in pursuing the arts as a creative outlet as well as a career choice is to ensure that children and youth can create art and learn about it in a nurturing and supportive environment.

I am a musician, and I was lucky to attend schools that made access to group and individual classes at low to no cost possible. I know many others for whom the same applies, and even more who "wish I would have been able to learn an instrument".

I absolutely urge you to abstain from cutting funding to these vital programmes.

Thank you,

Viviana

References

- https://www.lexialearning.com/blog/can-music-help-low-income-students-read-and-succeed-higher-rates
- https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0113383#s5
- https://psychcentral.com/lib/the-power-of-music-to-reduce-stress#3

From: WENDY UPSHON
To: Trustees
Cc: Jamie Davis
Subject: In support of continued funding for music programs
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:48:36 AM

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Please include this email in the upcoming Board Meeting Agenda Package:

We are raising our granddaughter from the age of 6 to her current age of 15, grade 2 through to grade 10. She was a member of choir in elementary school, played the flute in elementary, changed from flute to alto saxophone in middle school and currently in grade 10 she is still in band, on alto saxophone. The schools attended were Quadra Elementary, Cedar Hill Middle School and currently she is attending Reynolds Senior School.

We took in our granddaughter from a neglectful household. She is now thriving, mostly an A student and always gets an A in Band Music. I attribute the rich experience of music to how well she is doing now. The choir teacher and band teachers have all been excellent, enthusiastic positive mentors.

Please do not cut funding for any aspect of the music programs. My husband and I believe singing and playing an instrument in a band has contributed immensely to our granddaughter's happiness. Although the funding cuts have not yet reached high school, at any step along the way ie, elementary and middle schools, if funding is eliminated, it could affect the mental health of our children.

Please contact us directly if you would like to discuss via phone,
Thank you,
Wendy and Chris Upshon

Sent from my iPad

From: * procyshen
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Cuts
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 7:43:22 PM

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The news that the School District 61 in Victoria plans to reduce education funding by seven million dollars is distressing. Included in those cuts to programs is the decimation of music programs at the elementary and secondary levels. This action is alarming.
For many students the music program is the only part of school that gives them joy. Appreciation of music, learning to play an instrument, singing in a choir provide a basis for a lifelong love of music and for many people, a hobby that brings them together with others into a community of music long after formal schooling ends.

One of the most amazing aspects of Victoria as a small city is the accessibility to music in all its forms and at all levels from classical and opera to jazz and pop. I would suggest that if you asked the adults who sing in choirs, and play in quartets, bands and orchestras how they became so involved in our community of music, they would talk nostalgically about positive experiences with music as young children. It is worth mentioning that research indicates that for elderly people with dementia, music memories linger long after other life memories fade.

Music brings lasting joy to our lives. Music is part of our culture as people who value the arts. Music brings connection and a sense of peace in times of turmoil in our world. Depriving our young people of opportunities to learn about and participate fully in music in all its forms is a sad commentary on our priorities.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Sincerely, Winnifred Procyshen, former Superintendent of Curriculum, The York Region Board of Education, Ontario

Sent from my iPad

From: Zan Carrow
To: Trustees
Subject: Middle school cuts- please include at board meeting tomorrow
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 12:25:46 PM

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Dear Trustees,

I would like the following information included in your board meeting agenda package this coming Tuesday regarding the budget cuts for middle school programs, please.

My house is cluttered with many instruments collected through the years: flute, trumpet, ukuleles. My children spend every day playing these instruments and enjoy playing the many pieces they have learned through their school programs, which all began at elementary school. These school programs which were first offered to them at View Royal Elementary (including ukulele) have created a lasting positive experience which has fueled a passion for music. It has allowed them to feel connected to a community and has fostered skill development in public performances, perseverance, responsibility, social skills, and creativity. My daughter is in grade six at Shoreline middle school and started playing the flute this year. Her younger brother, who is in grade four at View Royal Elementary and has Autism Spectrum Disorder, has been so inspired by the middle school music that he has started private trumpet lessons and purchased a trumpet in anticipation of joining Shoreline's band in two years. My son struggles with athletics and was looking forward to being a part of an inclusive school program he could excel in, but it looks like this won't be a possibility with the proposed cuts. It will be such a loss to cut these rewarding programs that offer an equitable opportunity for children to learn to play an instrument, which I know is financially out of reach for many families to pursue outside of school. I urge you to reconsider the budget cuts of middle school and elementary music programs, which will most certainly have many negative consequences.

Sincerely,
Zan Carrow

From: Zoë Topshee
To: Trustees
Subject: A plea from a graduating music student
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:42:43 AM

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To the trustees of the school board,

Hello, my name is Zoë, and I'm a student at Esquimalt High School

Please do not cut funding for music programs for middle school in our school board. As a student about to graduate from grade 12 I cannot tell you how great a role music has played in my past 13 years of schooling, but especially in the last 6.

I have been a music student in four school boards, over three provinces and 2 countries in those past 6 years, as a result of military family moves. It's through music involvement I settled most easily, found friends and built my confidence in my new schools. Music provides just so many great benefits to students and entire school communities.

Though I am in high school, and I've gotten to do the most with music at this stage in my education, middle school is the essential time to be introduced to music programs, since it is when the interest in music begins for young students. It is a middle school music education that enables students to begin developing as musicians. There would be no students with which to supply the high school music programs, if middle school music programs are significantly reduced.

There are so many people in my community for which school music programs are the only access to learning an instrument and having music in their life. Many students aren't lucky enough to come from families who can afford private lessons. School programs also enable students to co-operate and make music together, which benefits even the students who do take private lessons. It would be a tragedy, to me, that other students who will come after me won't have the same opportunities that I had.

I recognize that due to a pandemic, there are economic consequences. And I do not want the response to this backlash to be that the athletics or STEM programs, for example, will be cut instead, nor the salaries of teachers. These are all imperative to a well-rounded, quality education. If there could be a way to cut back on the district's budget proportionately, in regards to how much each sector was funded prior to the pandemic, that would be the only fair thing to do.

It is not my responsibility to tell you how to do your jobs, nor tell you how to solve this problem.

I'm counting on the people who make decisions about our education on our behalf to do the right thing, and figure this out for the sake of the community.

Thank you,

Zoë Topshee

From: Amanda Chaval
To: Trustees
Subject: Music in Middle School
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:45:49 AM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I am Amanda Chaval - the Choir Director at Glenlyon Norfolk School, and a music teacher in SD61. I cannot imagine that you would ever consider getting rid of music in schools. I've worked my whole life to set up my career and absolutely love my job as a music teacher. You cannot take this away from my students or myself.

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Thank you,

Amanda

From: Andrea Walker Collins
To: Trustees; watters@sd61.bc.ca; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell;
Subject: RE: PROPOSED CUTS TO MUSIC PROGRAMMING AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:15:22 PM

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April 13, 2021

Dear Members of the Legislative Assembly and District Trustees ,

RE: PROPOSED CUTS TO MUSIC PROGRAMMING AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

My name is Andrea Walker Collins, and I am a parent in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event is irresponsible and both the District and Provincial government should be held responsible for this egregious lack of judgement.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, I implore you to do the right thing for our kids education and properly fund public schools in this province!

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Andrea Walker Collins

From: Andrea Warner
To: Trustees
Subject: for correspondence for April 13, 2021 Board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 11:39:01 AM

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Hi,
I am writing to express my concerns about cutting music programs in the schools. I understand that there are financial issues instigating this 'solution' but it is not a good solution. Just as some kids flourish for sports, some kids flourish for music. Additionally, for those who are not going to have careers in music, it offers a lifetime of comradeship in community music-making, as it has in my case. And of course, it provides a well-rounded citizen of the world who will appreciate this fine art.
Please find another way to deal with the financial issues.
Sincerely,
Andrea Warner
Oak Bay, BC

From: Andrew WICKENS
To: Trustees
Cc: Joy Wickens
Subject: Music Program
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:37:35 AM

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Dear Trustees:

Please include this email in your board meeting agenda package.

Please reconsider the defunding of the music programs for primary and middle schools. Music is no less important in the school curriculum than math or language skills.

Music has proven to enhance students ability to learn in other areas of the curriculum.

Music has provided and outlet and community for students that have nowhere else to fit in.

Music provides a break in the day from sitting at a desk. An opportunity to get up and move around. As sitting is proving to be the new "smoking" students need this healthy activity.

Music is a shared asset with the community. The music programs provide free entertainment to the local communities with school concerts, playing at Municipal events and caroling at area senior homes.

Music programs are not available in a community setting. Unlike sports programs that are replicated by local clubs you can not find a 30 piece band to join at your local clubhouse but you can find soccer, baseball, football, hockey, lacrosse, swim, speed skating and a plethora of other sports.

Music programs are accessible to all students despite economic backgrounds. The removal of music programs from the elementary and middle schools will adversely affect all students but will target the financially challenged students the most. These students do not have the resources required to take music lessons outside of the school setting.

Music programs staffing cuts will need to be replaced with other staff. If you cut one block or period of music you will need to replace it with something else. How are you planning on staffing that? Music teachers give so much of their own time to the music programs that it must be like having two teachers for the price of one.

Finally, in this pandemic shaped era it is unfair to require School Districts to balance budgets. The funding shortfalls should not be the responsibility of the students by removing programs. The shortfalls should be the responsibility of the community as a whole. Let's continue to fund such worthy programs as music and let the Province figure out how to fund it.

Thank you for your time and consideration;

Andrew Wickens
Proud parent of SD 61 grade 11 Student.

Sent from my iPhone

From: ann wilmut
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to Musical Education
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:57:50 AM

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Dear Board Members:

Dismay and despair are my feelings right now at the news of your proposed cuts to musical education in SD61 elementary and middle schools. This is not the route to take. Music is essential to mental health in schools and a connected link to academic success. You know this. There is enough evidence to support this statement all over the world. At this time of pandemic restrictions music is the salve to the soul, heart and mind.

How do I know this. I am a singer in a choir. I have had music as part of my whole life. I am not a professional musician but during this last year of shut-downs, shut-outs and isolation the life of my choir on zoom has saved my mental health and kept me connected to others while singing alone. I am also a former early childhood educator. Working mostly with special needs children, including children with hearing loss, I always, always included music in the daily curriculum. Years and years later the results of this would come back to me through the children who were now grown up. Once, a young girl was introduced to me by her mother as her early teacher, but she not recognize me. But when I said, "Do you remember this song?" she exclaimed, "That was YOU!"

I am also a parent and a grandparent. My children benefited enormously from the music education they received, albeit in private schools. But my grandson currently enrolled at Lansdowne Middle School, previously Willows and soon to be Oak Bay thrives because of the music program. He until this year of Covid would go to school early four mornings a week to participate in all the band options. Recently he proudly played his instrument with his Dad at my zoom birthday party event. He was so proud of himself. When I told him he sounded terrific, he said; "It's not the same as performing in a group and in public when you can hear all the other instruments." He lost so much this year but especially music when Covid hit. He is longing to get to Oak Bay High for the much lauded music program there. BUT would he be eligible/able/want to do this had he not had all the previous music education?

Please include this letter in correspondence for the upcoming Board Meeting and please, please do not EVER consider again reducing or removing musical education from the school curriculum. There have been enough cuts, enough disregard of the needs of young minds.

Yours,
Ann Wilmut
Oak Bay

From: Brian Tucker
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: The importance of Music Education and SD61
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:39:45 AM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,
My name is Brian Tucker, and I am a parent of a student, and a husband of a teacher in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you in regards to the upcoming debate focusing on funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.
I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community. **SD61s strings, band, and choir programs literally changed the lives of my children, and their friends. I was not in a position to afford to introduce my children to music, through private music lessons, and I am so grateful for the experiences my children received in their schools. Music was both a reprieve from stress and anxiety, and also allowing them to work toward mastering something that can be a friend and companion the rest of their lives.**

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools. The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.
These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.
I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.
Respectfully,
Brian Tucker

From: Brooke Albers
To: Trustees
Subject: Please Include in Correspondence at Board Meeting Tonight
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:03:54 PM

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From: Brooke Albers
George Jay Parent

April 13, 2021

To: Shelley Green, Superintendent, School district 61
Trustees, School District 61

Dear Superintendent Green, School District 61 Trustees and Board Meeting Attendees:

I am writing this letter to vote no to the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school programs.

I am a mother of a child at George Jay Elementary School. I have worked with children in music for 20 years, yet I am still constantly amazed by the positive changes I witness as they engage in musical activities together. It is multisensory and uses both sides of the brain. It can be nonverbal. As such, children who speak different languages; who have special needs; physical disabilities; or who find other social tasks challenging, can all participate in music as a highly inclusive social activity. In cultures all over the world music has historically been part of social gatherings and constantly present in households. But unfortunately, this is no longer the case in many communities. The Elementary and Middle School music programs in school district 61 are one of the only places many children have the opportunity to participate in making music.

Unless a child's parents or guardians are musical or can afford music lessons, this is a subject which is less accessible than any other to children outside of school time. At home we can read with our kids; they can play sports in the park with friends; we can help them with math and history; and yes, we can play recorded music and sing and dance together. But few parents are able to help their child learn to play an instrument.

I trust you as experts in education to develop curricula informed by the latest research in child and youth development. I understand that there are limited funds to go around, but with such a massive body of research detailing the positive cognitive, social and emotional benefits of music in classrooms, I cannot understand the decision to reduce this programming for our children.

Please consider each students' education as a combination of school and home learning. School is the place where *all* children can participate in creating music. That is a precious opportunity and I hope you will not reduce the already limited time students have to engage in

music together.
Thank you,

Brooke Albers

From: Capt D.A. Moses
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:44:24 PM

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Re: Proposed cuts to school and district music programs in 2021-2022

These proposed cuts would cause so much damage, I am shocked that they are even on the table. The proposal is incredibly short-sighted and tantamount to bullying. You can't seriously be ok with stomping on the happiness of children all over the school district in order to buy $200,000 in laptops for visiting teachers, which might last five years at most? The long-term benefits of children learning music at the elementary and middle school ages are well-documented worldwide, so to be considering cuts is absolutely backwards. The funding needs to be increased tenfold, not virtually eliminated.

Where is the Board's sense of exploration? Does no one know of the phenomenon in Venezuela called El Sistema in Venezuela? There, learning music has changed the lives of over 700,000 children forever; it has saved lives and families, and it has made successes of those who didn't even dare to dream of a humane existence. I challenge Board members to watch this video and not see what a mistake the proposed cuts would be. No one can say better the benefits of music for children than José Antonio Abreu.

Please increase the funding for music and the arts in SD61. Don't cut anything.

Most sincerely,

Captain Daniel Moses
Director of Music
Band of the 5th (BC) Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery
4th Horn
Victoria Symphony
Father of a 10-year old and a 5-year old at Cloverdale

-30-

Other El Sistema videos for reference when Board members have some time:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43tqQhOTCgQ
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXRRJDPKt3k
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uintr2QX-TU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v4YrZbf0NA

--
Capt D.A. Moses, CD
Director of Music
Band of the 5th (BC) Field Regiment, RCA

From: Catherine Hudson
To: Trustees
Subject: 8 reasons why music is important to us- please submit to the SD trustee meeting as an attachment!
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 7:22:08 AM

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8 reasons why music is important to us

https://www.mitchdeklein.com/blog/201688-reasons-why-music-is-important-to-us

'If music be the food of love play on'. I am urging our school district 61 trustees to consider the grave impact that cancelling music lessons/programs would have on the students health and well-being. And after all it has been scientifically proven that engaging with music improves memory. It is a universal language that all students should continue to have access to at the school setting.
C Hudson

Sent from my iPhone

From: Catherine Rubincam
To: Trustees
Subject: Cancellation of school music programmes
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 11:06:33 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To the Trustees of the Greater Victoria School District:
The recently announced decision to cancel school music programmes is deplorable. There is abundant evidence that exposure to musical training of all kinds at an early age contributes in many ways to the success of students in their whole educational endeavour. It also represents a slap in the face to organizations such as the Victoria Conservatory of Music that have fundraised to increase the availability of musical education in our schools.
Please vote NO to this decision.

I **would like my letter to be taken to tonight's Board Meeting.**

Catherine Rubincam
Associate Professor of Classics Emeritus
Departments of Classics and Historical Studies
University of Toronto

From: Ceilidh Dobbie
To: Trustees; Shelley Green
Subject: I can"t believe I"m sending this email.
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 5:08:17 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Ceilidh and I am an Arts Educator in Langley, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61. I'm in shock and awe. Please don't do this. Please don't even consider removing music from a generation.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Ceilidh

From: Chanah Caplan
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to music programs
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:29:53 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 Trustees
I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria. As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.
Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Please include my letter in the correspondence at your upcoming April 13, 2021 SD61 Trustee Board meeting

Thank you
Chanah Aviva Caplan

From: Colleen F
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd: Letter of Support to keep music programming - please add this letter to correspondence at meeting this eve
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 11:20:02 AM

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Colleen F
> **Date:** April 13, 2021 at 11:16:06 AM PDT
> **To:** Colleen F
> **Subject: Letter of Support to keep music programming - please add this letter to**
>
> Good morning,
>
> I would like to express my apprehensions around thinking of music funding being cut at the elementary and middle levels.
> I strongly believe that music has the capacity to meet humans on particular growing children's needs on so many levels. From an deep experience of interdependence through cooperation and community that it creates to self expression, creativity, celebration and o alienation. Music moves is, heals us and connects us to ourselves and others on ways that is not so easily accessed through other means. Not to mention the brain development and growth that comes along with understand, reading and creating music.
> Please include my letter at the school trustee meeting. I truly hope the community's feedback will be carefully considered. I understand the board is needing to make some tough decisions. I would like to request to make your decisions with considerations for all the pressures and stresses children face today. I truly believe taking away a resource that in its innate nature holds the capacity for so much learning, opportunity for connection, expression and contribution would not be serving our children in the best way we are able.
>
> Thank you for your time and dedication to education in our province.
>
> Colleen MacDougall - future Kindergarten Mom
>
> Sent from my iPhone

From:
To: Trustees
Subject: Major Cuts to Elementary and Middle School Programs
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 6:26:46 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As a former Ontario elementary, middle school and secondary school music teacher now living in Victoria, I am aware of the value and importance of this program. I am still in communication with some former music students and understand the impact that music has had on their lives as professional and community musicians and audience participants.

I have also attended and participated as a volunteer at the annual Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival and was very impressed with both the quality and number of student participants. These experiences provide memories for life.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Thank you,

Corinne MacDonald

From: Crystal Milne
To: Trustees
Subject: Funding Cuts in SD 61
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:28:35 AM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Crystal Milne, and I am a community member in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,
Crystal Milne

From: Daphne Hughes
To: Trustees
Subject: correspondence for inclusion in the meeting on Tuesday April 13th 2021
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:50:46 AM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

I am writing to urge the trustees to vote No to the proposed cuts for the music programmes.
Daphne Hughes

From: David Lowe
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Programs in the Schools
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 7:11:04 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

The Superintendent, Victoria School Board,
Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting
I am appalled that the School Board is thinking of cutting music programs in the schools. Music is so important to a child's development. As a creative person, I have suffered from depression for most of my life.
Music has been an anchor for me, however down I was feeling, if I listened to music, played music or wrote songs, it would lift my spirits. Music is a very social thing as well, most of my friendships revolve around music because, on days when I would feel like shutting myself off in my room, I could usually drag myself out to a performance or a rehearsal, where the music would take me out of myself.
Teenage years can be very tough for many of our young people, and Sports, Art and Music are refuges for many troubled youths. Everybody has the need to belong somewhere, and the band programs in Middle and High schools have provided that for many students over the years. These are places where students who are not high academic achievers, can experience success and work together with their peers to produce something that will enrich their lives.
The music industry in Victoria is a very important one: Musical Theatre, Opera, Symphony Orchestra, Folk Clubs, Jazz Clubs, Rock Concerts etc. etc. Can you imagine living in the city where none of these things were available? As an example, when corporations plan to relocate head offices to a new city, culture is an extremely important factor in their decision-making, and rightly so. Without audiences, culture dies. We know that school music programs develop musicians, professional and amateur, but they also develop audiences for future musicians.
I am sure you are aware of the research that shows that trained musicians achieve more when studying Mathematics. I believe that the

impulses that buzz around the brain fertilize each section of that brain, and that creativity, Music, Art and problem solving are all inter-connected. Remove any one of those key elements from a child's education and you run the risk of creating a generation of frustrated underachievers.

In the words of Martin J. Bergee, in the *Journal of Research in Music Education:*

If you want a young person's -- or any person's -- mind to develop, then you need to develop it in all ways it can be developed. You can't sacrifice some modes of learning to other modes of learning for whatever reason, be it financial or societal.

I understand you have tough financial decisions to make, but please do not decimate the music programs as they are so important to the development of the whole child.

Thanks for your consideration,

David Lowe BFA. (retired Art & Music teacher)

NOTE: I originally sent this email from my wife's email address.

From: David Stocks
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence for April 13 meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 6:52:19 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

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Thank you very much for your service on the School Board. In your important role, we are depending on you to ensure that our students receive a high-quality education.

As has been demonstrated by numerous studies, music is connected to deep structures in the human brain. The study of music contributes to learning other subjects. If music education is removed, the learning of all other subjects will be harmed.

Please ensure that music education remains part of the school offerings.

Thanks again.

David Stocks
--

David Stocks

April 12, 2021

To: Board of Trustees of SD#61 (Jordan Watters, Diane McNally, Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze, Elaine Leonard, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter, Ann Whiteaker

Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools

Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent

Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools

Re: school budget proposal – eliminating music programs

As a parent, I'd like to provide input to the school budget proposal which would see the elimination of music programs. I've asked for my letter to be included in the April 13, 2021, Board meeting agenda package.

Music programs are important to our youth for many reasons; too many to put to paper and I'm sure you'll hear the same reasons from others that I would tell you.

My older daughter enjoyed music class and choir all through elementary school. Throughout middle school, she was in band and choir. Now in her first year of high school, she gave up band so she could try dance (couldn't do both) and she is enjoying musical theatre. At her request, she has been taking piano lessons since September 2020.

My younger daughter has enjoyed music class and choir except for this year due to Covid-19. She has been telling us she wants to play drums/percussion in Grade 6 since she was in Grade 2 or 3. The middle school music teacher suggested a year of piano and a year of drums. Piano lessons were last year (grade 4) and this year, she's taking drum lessons.

I understand about budgets and trying to figure out where money will come from to pay for things. This school year, we are paying about $200 per month for music lessons. Can we afford it? No. Is it worthwhile? Yes. Ultimately, the money is coming from our food and entertainment budget.

Music (and art) are not just enjoyable to my daughters but therapeutic as well. It's a basic necessity for their well-being now and in the future.

Music is an important part of the school curriculum. It benefits many throughout the District. Many students wouldn't have the opportunity to experience music if they didn't have it at school. Students are eager and willing to play an instrument in Grade 6. My older daughter had a few friends drop-out of band and/or choir at the end of grade 6 or 7. I'm sure other parents can say the same. If students have to wait until Grade 8 to play in band, it will be an opportunity that's lost to them.

It's not just the school district that invests in music programs, it's the parents too. I was surprised to find out there's a separate Band/choir PAC to fundraise and help with and/or cover the cost of things not covered by the school budget and help reduce the cost of band trips for us parents, etc.

I ask that you keep looking at the budget proposal to find a solution so that music can continue to be part of the school curriculum as it is now.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Debbie Bowden

Mrs. Debbie Bowden,

Mom to two daughters (grade 5 and 9)

From: Deborah Higgins
To: Trustees
Subject: Music programs cuts
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 7:34:35 AM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

I vote NO to cuts in music programs in elementary and middle schools in Victoria.
Please add this email to Correspondence for tonight's meeting.
Sincerely,
Deborah Higgins

Sent from my iPhone

From: Nerenberg, Lucila
To: Trustees
Subject: supporting music programs at sd61- .please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:43:13 AM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear board members,

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

I hope you will retain the amazing music programs at sd61. As a local parent and physician, music programs boost students self confidence, mental health. They provide a unique skill set and also critical coping strategies that will help them blossom into their full potential.

One could almost consider the music programs like a vaccine against future depression and anxiety, as well as a recipe for well balanced academic success across the board.

Thanks,

Dr. Lucila Nerenberg

From: Dramulin Trotsky
To: Trustees
Subject: music in schools - please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 11:30:13 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Trustees Greater Victoria School District (61),

please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting

As the father of two recent graduates of Oak Bay high school it is - frankly - shocking to read that there is a proposal to eliminate much of the music programing in our schools. These two kids of mine have benefited more than I can tell you from their years and years of being involved in music. I'd like to share with you their stories:

My son (born female now transitioned to male), began with the cello in grade 4 at Quadra, continued with it at Willows in grade 5 and sang with the exceptional Gail Evans. At Monterey he played the saxophone, and later the clarinet. At high school became very involved in the choir program, and it was there - in choir, with the confidence that had come in being musical, in being a part of this wide ranging group of individuals who had been together for years, that my son came out and asked to be recognised as the person he knew he was. He was the first "born female" member of the men's choir in grades 11 and 12. Choir and the music program, and all of his peer group with whom he had been making music from grades 5 and 6 knew him, loved him and accepted him and his choice to be who he is.

I know this is anecdotal evidence about why the music program is important - we can read the science, the countless reports on neural development, social development, community engagement, and more. I thought that you might like to know that the music program in the Greater Victoria School district offered a safe and caring environment that has helped my son find himself and happiness.

He is now attending 3rd year at Emily Carr University and is continuing to find himself and his happiness. I hope that others will not be deprived of the opportunity to have such a caring and compassionate environment in the future.

My other son, now 25 is on the Autism spectrum, as he said on Check News on Sunday - when they were interviewing him for his second performance at Herman's Jazz club (as the headliner) - music is one of the focuses with which his autistic brain has gifted him. He was able to develop that gift and find community through his years of opportunity in SD61. He started with viola, and moved to the violin in his elementary years. Played trumpet from the start of middle school until high school graduation. Sang in countless choirs and in musical theatre. He was included: his "eccentricities" were just seen as a part of his persona; he was accepted; he learned to socialize as his peer group in these bands, orchestras, and choirs learned to see past his non normative behaviors. In his grade 12 year he won the

adjudicated scholarship as best musician in SD61. In grades 11 and 12 was awarded recognition for his service to the choir community at Oak Bay. He has completed a two year certification at Camosun in Vocal Jazz, and is finishing his second year at UVIC in music. He has direction in his life - and it is in the field of music. Why? Well in large part because of the opportunities he was afforded from a young age to pursue his passion for music in the public schools of SD61.

Please do not take music away from the kids in our community - some of them NEED it as it provides a port on the storm that is growing up.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tim Bradshaw (before all else, a thankful father)

From:
To: Trustees
Subject: Please do not cut funding to the SD61 music program
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:32:07 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Trustees,

I would like my email to be included in the Board Meeting Agenda package for the Trustee meeting on April 13, 2021.

I am extremely concerned about the proposed cuts to the music program in SD61. The music program has been a lifeline for my daughter through a very difficult year. We considered not having her participate in band this year due to COVID-19, and she literally begged us to let her. That is how much it meant to her, which is pretty rare for a pre-teen.

The program at Shoreline is a beacon of what an excellent program should be – and gives students an avenue for different learning than is offered through traditional classroom learning. I've seen my daughter's classmates who have struggled in traditional subject excel at band and music programs. It can give students a real sense of accomplishment and achievement, which is always a good thing for kids to experience. Let me juxtapose this with some exploratories – where yesterday, my daughter spooned yoghurt out of a store-bought container and sliced apples. This isn't what I would call an exceptional learning experience.

Please reconsider your proposed budget cuts to the school music program. This is an integral part of learning for students, and brings together students, parents, and teachers in a really positive way. It gives kids a sense of accomplishment, and I believe truly aids in their cognitive development.

Thank you for considering my email.

Elaine Cross

From: Emerald Pringle
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Concerns about proposed budget cuts to SD61 for the board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 4:47:54 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Emerald and I grew up attending school in SD61 (I graduated in 2012). I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education.

I benefited immensely from the strings and band programs throughout elementary, middle, and high school. School music brought me immense joy and pride and was also a source of close peer friendships. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people, and is just as important as any academic program. Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic which has greatly impacted students' school experience and mental health is incredibly short-sighted, given the proven benefits of music education.

I would also like to voice my support for Inclusive Education and student-centred learning, specifically the importance of retaining Education Assistant positions and gifted programs in schools. During my time in SD61, participating in the gifted programs helped me be more engaged at school. Similarly, many students rely upon EAs to meet their socioemotional needs and achieve their learning goals. I am currently working as a social worker in a school and am acutely aware of the fact that EAs are an essential part of many students' education. To make dramatic cuts to this aspect of education in a time when students' learning has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic is only going to result in further academic delays and increased stress for students and families. No two students are the same and it is vitally important that needs-based programs continue to be available for all students.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants, gifted programs and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. Fight for arts in schools. Fight for student-centred and needs-based supports, including retaining all Education Assistant positions and gifted programs.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Emerald Pringle

From: Eric MacKnight
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence: Tuesday, April 13th, 2021 board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:04:25 AM

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To the Trustees of SD6:1

I am dismayed to hear that the Board is considering cuts to music programs.

As a band student many years ago, as a teacher, and as a parent, I have seen again and again the incalculable benefits of music education to individual students and to the community as a whole.

I understand the financial pressures. I urge the Board, however, to consider all other options and to "think outside the box" before approving cuts that would cause damage that is well-known and documented.

With my best wishes,

Eric T. MacKnight

From: Faith Gildenhuys
To: Trustees
Subject: Cancellation of music programs
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:56:46 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please think again about axing music in schools. Music is not a frill; it is as important as the other core programs to keeping students healthy and well educated. Please include my comments for consideration at the next Board meeting.
Faith Gildenhuys
Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: George Cornett
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include this email in correspondence for the April 13 Board Meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 3:14:25 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Members of the Board and School District 61 Superintendents,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the major cuts you are proposing to School District 61 Elementary and Middle School Music programs. I understand that 'balancing a budget' is a daunting process and requires hard decisions. However, if you truly stand by your statement that " the student experience is at the heart of what we do in SD 61", then you cannot help but see that it is Music, in all its forms, that is at the very heart of the student experience.

I would like to give a specific example of a student who found her voice and her confidence and her life long support through music. In elementary school, this bright, creative student suffered from anxiety and low self esteem. Due to these issues, she became the victim of bullying. Fortunately, she was exposed to music in many forms, but particularly in starring roles in Musical Theatre at the elementary school level. She went on to excel in band and middle and high school music programs. Due to her involvement in music programs, and the support of family and teachers, she had regained her self esteem and ended up on the Honour Roll throughout her high school years. The band and musical theatre programs allowed her to be part of a group of students who now valued her talents. After graduating, she studied nursing, and it is more than likely that she is now on the front lines of the fight against Covid. I expect that when she goes home at night she now leans on music to restore her spirit at this difficult time.

If you were to visit any of the district schools, you would see the absolute essential role music plays, and you would see music teachers giving their utmost to their students. Music doesn't just take place during 'teaching hours'. There are before school groups, recess and lunch groups, and after school groups. Music is at the core of the student experience and it is a joyful, rewarding experience for all students. It is inclusive of all abilities and it teaches so many life long skills. When you attend a student performance, you see the dedication and the pride students take in what they have achieved. At an assembly at View Royal Elementary, when the choir is called upon to come to the stage, you see that Mr. Lee, the phenomenal music teacher, has attracted most of the school population to join the choir. This scene would be repeated in all School District 61 schools, and should continue to be supported by the Board. It is heartbreaking to think that the Board would contemplate all but eliminating the extraordinary contribution that music and theatre teachers make to the well being of students. Students are asking you to, "Let us play!"

Through music, students practise and learn 'harmony'. Please allow them to continue to find and build on this harmony through the joy of music.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Cornett
A grandparent of grandchildren who have benefitted immensely from the current School District 61 music program at all levels

Sent from my iPad

From:	Heather Bradfield
To:	Shelley Green; caldwell@sd61.bc.ca; Deb Whitten; Trustees
Cc:	educ.minister@gov.bc.ca; premier@gov.bc.ca; murray.rankin.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Subject:	Proposed Funding Cuts to Music Education in SD61
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:16:05 AM
Attachments:	Oliver.jpg

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

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Good morning,

I recently moved back to Victoria after having left to study for my undergraduate and law degrees, and then working on the mainland while developing my practice. I brought back with me my husband (from Ontario) and three children, all presently under the age of seven.

I advocated strongly for this school district and designed our lives here in Victoria so that our children could attend schools in SD61. I did so because I fundamentally believed that it presented them with a sound opportunity for a well-rounded public education. My hope in that respect is in very real jeopardy. I am shocked and heartbroken by the proposed sweeping cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs in SD61.

I have seen some of the letters to the Board and Trustees prepared by other parents and community advocates. I will not endeavour to reiterate what they have already presented. I also only just learned of the proposal over the weekend and have not had the chance to review the budget in-depth and am not in a position to extend suggestions on how to rework or re-evaluate competing priorities. And I do appreciate the tremendous complexity of these decisions.

I am instead going to offer you only a simple personal anecdote from the other side of it. Today, I am the kids that were standing on Richmond Rd. yesterday morning, at 44 years of age.

I started my schooling at Campus View Elementary in 1982 and was there through Grade 7. Music was fundamental to my life in those formative years - I played the violin from the time I was four until I was 15. I participated in choir with Mme. Archembault and Mrs. Doherty. I was part of the Grade 5 ukulele group, I played the clarinet in grades 6 and 7 band, and I had the joy of being part of musicals like "Oliver Twist". To this day remember the words to many of the songs that we performed for audiences of proud parents in a musty gym, for appreciative seniors in care facilities, and for cheering crowds from the steps of the Legislative Buildings. When I hear Raffi (which happens often in my life!) I am reminded of many delightful times singing and strumming on my ukulele with my friends in the old music portable at Campus View.

I know now that through those experiences, I developed the capacity

for deep social connection, fostered valuable skills such as patience and perseverance, found tools for emotional regulation, learned a universal language, came to appreciate the value of community service, and blew my neuro-pathways open in ways that I could never have appreciated until much later in life. Without question, the music programs offered in my primary public school years have profoundly contributed to my success in life as a lawyer, a partner, a friend, a child and as mother to three bright and beautiful children.

In light of the foregoing, I am sure that you can understand why I will do my very best to advocate for the same chance for my own children and that you can appreciate my very personal interest in maintaining these opportunities in our schools for the generations of young learners today. We have also all had an unprecedented and immensely challenging time over the last year - our children need these programs more than ever before, and when we have the upper hand, our community will need the outreach more than ever before.

Please hear me; please hear us. We are your stakeholders, we are the parents, we are the teachers, we are the voters and we are the taxpayers. I know that your task is formidable, and I do have confidence.

Kind regards,
Heather Bradfield

Enclosed, a photo of the female cast from "Oliver Twist" - Campus View Schoolyard, 1988. Please include this letter in the package presented to the Board.

From: Heather McNally
To: Trustees
Subject: Thank you for allowing my daughter to speak at the meeting tonight
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 11:40:08 PM

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Good evening,

I would like to thank you for giving my daughter Jessie Swan the opportunity to speak at the meeting tonight. I would like to share with you what I saw from my side of the screen.

I saw a very committed music student talking about how deeply music has been a part of her life since she was just starting out in elementary school. I saw her begin to realize as she spoke just how extraordinarily grateful she has been to have such outstanding and committed teachers. I saw her thinking about the lifelong friendships she has made, the opportunity to express herself and the community she has experienced.

I then saw her turn off her camera. She turned to me, wrapped her arms around me and sobbed. She sobbed as she realized what these cuts will truly mean for herself, for her classmates, for her school. She sobbed for her little sisters and brothers who may not have the life changing experience she has had. She sobbed because kids are so at the mercy of the adults. She sobbed because her heart was breaking. My heart was breaking too.

She then pulled herself together... and what did she pick up to help heal her soul?? Her flute and her piccolo. She played for over an hour, then migrated to the piano, and finally sang herself to sleep. Music is her solace as it is for so many of our children, and ourselves.

Please, please let us all look into this budget, let us be creative and let us find a way to keep the music playing,

Please include my letter in the next meeting's package; everyone needs to hear how are children are feeling,

Thank you,

Heather McNally

From: Heidi Tiedemann Darroch
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include in board meeting correspondence
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:11:47 AM

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Dear SD61 Trustees Watters, Duncan, Ferris, Hentze, Leonard, McNally, Painter, Paynter, and Whiteaker,

I am writing to ask that you consider the funding of elementary and middle school music programs within the context of the District's commitment to inclusive education that seeks to support all students to "fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations."

As I am sure you will be hearing from many parents, music education has been a lifeline for some of the district's most vulnerable learners, and many young people are engaged at school because of their involvement in music programs, especially during the fraught years of early adolescence.

If music programs are cut, families will be more reliant on community programming that is often not financially accessible; many of our young people will lose their opportunity to participate.

The budget challenges are daunting, and I hope that SD61 is engaged in discussions with the provincial government about how to ensure that all new government mandates, including COVID protocols, are fully funded. These are very difficult times, and I wish you all the best in your work. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Dr. Heidi Tiedemann Darroch, community member and former SD61 parent

From: Helen Lindholm
To: Trustees
Subject: Major cuts to music programs
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 1:35:09 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.
I have recently learned and was aghast to discover, that in order to help address a $7 million deficit, school district #61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to the elementary and middle school music programmes.
This is extremely short sighted, and completely ignores the social and cultural benefits that music programmes afford. For a start the beginning strings programme. Private lessons are extremely expensive.
I have been privileged to be able to afford 'cello lessons and guitar lessons for my grandsons, but there are many students for whom the luxury of private lessons is beyond the reach of their parents, and so a whole chapter of new beginnings is closed, if these cuts go ahead, as well as the group experience of playing together.
The enjoyment of music, its appreciation and the ability to play a musical instrument is a life long pleasure. Playing soccer certainly is not! Music is a shared experience, which speaks to our senses and imagination: choir participation is a joyous experience, and again can lead to a lifelong participation. I think it is extraordinary that the Board would consider curtailing the imaginative and creative activities and experiences which foster both the spirit and the soul.
Why not cut out physical activities, for example? All kinds of sports programmes are offered in numerous sports at heavily subsidised rates through the local recreation centres. There is swimming and soccer and softball and baseball. These activities ,(many sponsored by leagues), are affordable. There are summer tennis programmes and municipal tennis and pickle ball courts. For those not interested in out of school sport, a school offered cross country running should fit the bill as far as exercise is concerned. Do away with school gyms.
We as a community believe that physical health is important, so we are prepared to subsidise the costs of community sport participation. I believe that we also believe that the Arts are important. Drama, music and dance speak to the inner soul.
By limiting student approach to music programmes we are doing them a great disservice. Beethoven would be ashamed.
Sincerely,
Helen Lindholm

From: IRINA GAVRILOVA
To: Trustees
Subject: Music programs cuts by SD61
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:36:43 AM

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Dear SD 61 board members,
Recently I've become aware that the SD61 is considering major cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs. I am very saddened by this. The cuts will affect the spiritual, emotional and physical health of our children. This is especially troublesome during the pandemic situation we all have to endure now.
But I am not surprised - this is not the first time it's happening. Why music is on the chopping block again?
I hope there are enough leveled heads and just decent people in the District who care about our children to keep the programs alive. We owe this to our next generation.
Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Irina Gavrilova

From:	Jane Logan
To:	Trustees
Subject:	Supporting and Maintaining Music Programs in Elementary and Middle School Programs
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 5:04:47 PM
Importance:	High

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear School District 61 Trustees

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Sincerely

Jane Logan

Director, Pacific Opera Victoria

From: Jennifer Earle
To: Trustees
Subject: Correspondence for Apr. 13, 2021 Board Meeting.
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:41:42 AM

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Dear School District 61 Trustees and Superintendent:

Please vote "NO" to the proposed cuts restricting music programs in elementary and middle schools, and help maintain or improve accessibility for all young people.

Thank you for your attention to this vital issue.

Jennifer Earle

--
Jennifer Earle,
Victoria, BC

--

From: Jillian Watkins
To: Trustees; Angie Hentze; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Elaine Leonard; jennifer.whiteside.MLA@leg.bc.ca; Jordan Watters; Nicole Duncan; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Shelley Green; Tom Ferris
Cc: grace.lore.MLA@leg.bc.ca; Harold Caldwell; john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca; lana.popham.MLA@leg.bc.ca; mitzi.dean.MLA@leg.bc.ca; murray.rankin.MLA@leg.bc.ca; rob.fleming.MLA@leg.bc.ca; sonia.furstenau.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Subject: Music Cuts in SD61
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:25:06 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear trustees:

I am writing to add my voice to the multitude regarding the proposed music cuts in SD61.

I have been a parent in the public school system for 9 years, times 3 children, for a combined 16 years, so far. I have one child who finished at Lansdowne Middle School last year, one who plans to start there next year, and another who plans to be there starting in 2024. In all of my years as a school parent, I have watched educational resources dwindle and have seen that cutting music and arts programming for public school students is a perennial threat. I have not, however, made peace with this. I am frustrated and angry to be facing this issue once again. I strongly oppose the cuts you have already made and strongly oppose those you are now proposing.

My oldest son is a brilliant person who struggled through elementary and middle school to find his academic identity and to feel a sense of belonging, as his strengths are not those immediately obvious within what is left of the elementary and middle school curriculum. He is not an elite athlete, but found that there were very few resources dedicated to recreational athletics. The resources that were sent that way felt very much an afterthought and he felt no need to reach or achieve because the rec programs didn't seem to be important to anyone. He is not in a gifted program, but found that there were no resources at all directed toward 'recreational academics', aside from an occasional and very much cut back seat in the school library. He is also not an elite musician, in fact, I never would have identified him as a musician at all before he joined grade 6 band at Lansdowne, though I would call him one now. In the band programs at Lansdowne, however, there was a valued place for him, a recreational musician, where he was expected to commit to his place in the community and to work hard to find and achieve his own best, because that is a valuable thing to do, in and of itself—his contributions mattered because he was a part of a community that was both inclusive and also held him accountable for those contributions, but also because in an environment that expected him to find and do his best, he did, and then his contributions actually did

matter. He felt capable, he felt valued, he felt that he was a part of something bigger than himself. He was not cut from the program in favour of more gifted musicians or special musicians who qualified for funding, but was included as a part of what made the entire group something to be celebrated. There is a culture of excellence in Lansdowne music that is also inclusive, like nothing I have ever seen before. It blew my socks off. It reminded me that this ideal is possible.

Academically, we spent his elementary and middle school years watching and waiting, knowing that he would find his place when he finally reached high school, but without music there is a good chance that he would have lost interest in the idea of school as a productive way to spend his time during those waiting years (he was once told that his interests were "too much work" to pursue). The most important lessons to learn, over and over again in elementary and middle school are how to learn, how you specifically learn as an individual, and to understand that hard work, practice, and dedication make a positive difference to personal outcomes and achievements. My son learned these lessons through his participation in Lansdowne bands. Those experiences, fostered by the music teachers and programs at Lansdowne were the single most important part of his middle school experience, integral to his academic success during middle school, and his experiences in the Lansdowne music programs continue to form the backbone of his academic achievements and successes so far during his first year of high school. I expect they will remain a strong foundation to build upon throughout the rest of his academic and non academic life.

In another letter that I wrote to you all in the recent past, advocating on behalf of music education (perennial), I ended by telling you that my younger children are already planning to join bands and programs at Lansdowne, regularly discuss their instruments and are excited to be a part of it all. We talk about how much one of the kids is going to love choir, which we now understand is gone—a huge loss as choir has so little barrier to entry for kids who have already become self-conscious by grade 6 and may already lack the confidence to take risks and try new things and hesitate to commit to taking up an instrument, but can experience the joy of music through singing and being in their bodies within the safety of a large group. We talk about the absolutely amazing transformation that happens between grade 6 and grade 8 band, which we understand is proposed to become a thing of the past. We talk about how important it is to have something to ground yourself as you navigate those most tumultuous of years. I am disappointed and feel very sad that this likely won't be their experience if they attend Lansdowne, but I will continue to fill in the gaps for my kids, as I have done all the way along. We have the resources for lessons and groups and activities that will teach my children music, art, computer programming, and the learning of lessons we believe are so important to come from participating in programs like these and experimenting with using their brains and bodies in a variety of ways to stretch their experience and beliefs about themselves, to find out who they are and what is inside them, what they will choose to nurture and offer to the world. Supplementing for the public school system saps mental, physical and

emotional energy from the family and from other ways in which we could be contributing to the greater community if our needs are being even partially met by the system at scale, and privately sourced activities can be great, but there is something much more valuable to everyone in participating together with the whole, diverse community. As people who serve your community, I know that you must believe this yourselves. My kids will continue to receive a rich education, though they will lose the experience of diversity that is a foundation of my belief in the value of public education as an ideal. It is a loss for us, but we will find a way to still have many gains. It is a tragedy, however, that with these cuts you will remove these opportunities completely from the lives of many children and families who do not have the family and/or financial resources to participate. It is a tragedy to remove this kind of unifying program from the community at large, widening the gap between those with much privilege and those with less. It is terribly unjust and a very large, irreversible step in the wrong direction.

Please, please don't do this.

Sincerely,
Jillian Watkins

From: Jim Kingham
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include this email in correspondence for the April 13 Board Meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 7:30:22 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Members of the Board,

I began music studies in my first year of high school. I learned much from the program; from the simplest necessities of paying attention for the greater good, through the study of music and music theory, and on to an appreciation of how cooperation with others can be a beautiful experience in itself and a life-long contribution to social development. (As an aside, it would have been difficult for me to complete my university and post graduate studies without the income from playing music - an activity which arose from my high school music learning experience).

I have continued to play music since high school, primarily as an extension of my appreciation of the role music performance plays in our interactive society. Over the last sixty years, I have done my best to pass fruits of my high school music studies on to the broader community. I continue now, as I host the performances of the Peninsula Singers (as their MC), and as President of the Sidney Concert Band. The Sidney Band makes its own contribution to local High School music programs as it works with, and supports, our local high schools.

I now support both the Victoria Symphony and the Pacific Opera, while also playing with music ensembles in support of broader community objectives, like the Times Colonist's Christmas Fund. This is all, in large measure, thanks to the start I got with the High School music program.

Music is often a crucial component in the development of young minds in many ways - please don't cut back on students' music programs for short-term gains. The long-term effects of such action will be negative and more far-reaching than we can easily foresee.

Yours truly,

Jim Kingham, B.A., Ph.D.

From: Joanne Lum
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep the music programs going
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:17:59 AM

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Hi,

I writing to you regarding the proposed budget cuts to the 2021/22 school year.

Hearing that there will be cuts to the music program for student ups to grade 8 is unfair. How can this at all be justified? Where will the money be going instead of music and the arts?

In my opinion, music and arts are not readily available to EVERY family due to time constraints (weekend lessons) or money. Private lessons at the Victoria Conservatory, for example, can be up to $1000, if not more, per year, per child – starting from age 5. Music class in schools allow children to have access to instruments that they could only DREAM of playing. If music is not offered until grade 8 in the school, then a child who never had private lessons would be, technically, 8 years behind the children in the class who had private lessons. It is possible that being behind would be a deterrent to joining band or music class in grade 8 for those children.

On another note, music aids in language acquisition through sound structure. Music is an integral part of reading and listening skills. Many children who have disabilities are able to use music and arts to express themselves. Music has many psychological benefits. It can be soothing, relaxes the mind, and can help them process emotions. Why take that away from them?

So many of us who grew up in Victoria had some of the BEST music and band teachers in the late 80's – 90's. If there is any teacher that comes to mind as having influenced my life, personally, it would be my choir teacher in elementary school – Mrs Archambault. She gave us confidence in performing and taught us that anyone can have musical ability.

Music has been an important part in my life and for my children. Please don't take that away from my children and everyone else who feel the same way.

Feel free to add this to the agenda package.

Thank you for your time.

Joanne Lum

From: John G. Boehme
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 6:30:52 AM

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Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

John G. Boehme Dip Visual Art,BFA(VAL),MFA

"Yours, as always in perpetual service"

John G. Boehme acknowledges the homeland of the Lkwungen speaking peoples of the (Esquimalt and Songhees), Malahat, Pacheedaht, Scia'new, T'Sou-ke and W̱SÁNEĆ (Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum) peoples. I acknowledge their welcome and graciousness to work and seek knowledge here.

Huy ch q'u (Thank you).

From: judykuj@telus.net
To: Trustees
Subject: I would like my email letter placed in correspondence at the board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:08:56 PM

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I urge all trustees and the Superintendent to vote NO! to the proposed cuts restricting elementary and middle school music programs. Please help to maintain accessibility to music programs for all young people. This education is vital to their academic creative, emotional, and social development during their school years. The transferable life skills that music education helps to develop are what powers our youth to become the creative thinkers and leaders we need in every profession.

Judy Kujundzic

From: Julia Herzog
To: Trustees
Subject: please include this letter at the next board meeting.
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 1:54:11 PM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Superintendent and Trustees

We are writing to express our dismay at the proposed reduction of funding for music in School District 61. Our son Sammy was fortunate to have been a student at Lansdowne Middle School and is currently in the Esquimalt High School Challenge program. Sammy is our fourth child and prior to coming to Victoria we have lived in many places in Canada, the United States and overseas while raising Sammy's older siblings. The Lansdowne music program is a highlight amongst all of the education programs we have witnessed. When Sammy first started at Lansdowne we were apprehensive because of the size of the student population and our son's demeanor as a quiet and serious student. We were subsequently amazed at how the music program brought the Lansdowne community together in so many enriching and unexpected ways. It seemed like everyone was playing music there and then joining together to celebrate the children. Lansdowne music is an example of a program that promotes diversity and inclusion, something that we all strive for and often fail. Our son thrived in the school and ended up playing violin, trumpet and being offered the opportunity to take on another instrument if he wanted. In an era where every profession is trying to make efforts at making changes to promote inclusivity we are astounded at the proposal to cut music. As an educator, Howard notes that social development is the single most critical aspect of middle school years. The special language and discipline of music are modes of learning that are particularly suited to promoting social development. The notion that working together and working hard can create something greater than the self is at the core of musical learning. We urge the School District to maintain its music budget.

--
Julia Herzog
Howard Herzog

From: Kim Miller
To: Trustees
Subject: Please, if possible, include in the Board Meeting Agenda package for your meeting today-Please protect our Music Programs!
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:20:37 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

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Dear Trustees,

My first thought when I heard the music program and funding were in jeopardy was how can we consider cutting back or taking this from our kids when they have been living through a pandemic which has taken away simple joys, and increased stress and anxiety?

Music reduces stress and increases joy, and these benefits are just the beginning. Being part of a music program is about more than learning to make music. It teaches commitment and responsibility. It is a safe, positive way for kids to take a risk and express themselves. It can increase self-esteem; it improves hand eye coordination and it is great exercise for the brain! It's about creativity and opportunity. It is about trying new things, opening your mind and learning to put yourself out there. It can also be a way to decompress and cope. It is a way to communicate and connect. It's about showing up and being part of something that is positive and uplifting. It's about well-rounded well-being.

I want to be clear that if we were not enduring a pandemic, all of the above would still be true and I would still feel just as strongly in support of music in our schools (no cuts). The difference the pandemic makes, and the reason I mention it at all, is because it has shed a direct light on how imperative it is to care for the mental health of our kids. Much of the communication from the schools and district has reminded us about this very thing. You don't need to look further than a simple google search to see the positive associations between music and mental health.

I am not someone who speaks up loud or often, but on this, I had to say something. The kids need music in their schools, at least as much as they have it currently (if not more). I believe it is a need that when met contributes to their ability to learn and thrive in their other subjects and in their life outside school as well.

Please, where music in the schools is concerned, invest and support. It is a direct investment in and support of the children currently benefiting from these programs, and hopefully the ones that will benefit from them in the years to come.

Sincerely,
Kim Miller

Parent of children at Shoreline Middle School and Vic West Elementary

From: Laura Sehn
To: Trustees; Harold Caldwell; Shelley Green; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Ryan Painter; Elaine Leonard; Angie Hentze; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Diane Mcnally
Subject: Please add this letter and video to your next budget board meeting agenda.
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 4:25:05 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Reynolds Music Program various ensembles.mp4

Dear Board Members of School District 61 and Trustees,

In addition to my previous letter and a video I sent yesterday of both my children about the music program in the School District 61, I would like to include this video Reynolds secondary Programs from last school year, 2019-2020, and for this footage to also be include in the agenda of your next Budget meeeting tonight, April 13, 2021. These performances speak a lot about how important the music programs are for these students.
Thank you so much for your time and for recosidering these proposed budget cuts.
Sincerely,
Laura Alcaraz-Seh

From: Leslie VH
To: Trustees
Subject: Restriction of Music Programs in Elementary and Middle Schools
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 11:37:46 AM

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CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To School Trustees:

I was shocked to hear of the implementation of restrictions to Music programs in Elementary and Middle Schools for the next school year.

This year with Covid has been particularly difficult for children and teens and to restrict these programs would be devastating to many of the students and could have very serious consequences for their mental health.

I would ask you to reconsider your decision in this regard.

At the Board Meeting today, I would like this email to be added to the many others advocating for these programs to continue.

Regards,

Leslie Vander Haegen

From: Linda
To: Trustees; Shelley Green
Subject: Proposed cuts to school music programs
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 2:29:48 PM
Attachments: SD #61 - Proposed Cuts.doc
Importance: High

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include this letter in correspondence for the next board meeting (word doc attached). Thank you.

April 13, 2021

To: Trustees and Senior Administration of School District #61

From: The Advocacy Committee of the British Columbia Choral Federation (BCCF)

Re: Proposed cuts to elementary and middle school music programs.

The BCCF urges the Board and Administration of SD #61 to avoid reducing support for music programs for elementary and middle school students. Neuroscience research indicates that music education results in bigger, better functioning brains. It is as necessary as the muscle development and other physiological benefits that result from involvement in athletics.

In the article entitled "The Benefits of Music Education: An Overview of Current Neuroscience Research", the Royal Conservatory (rcmusic.ca) states that music education results in:

- Improved language and skills
- Increased emotional resilience
- Increased empathy
- Increased attention span
- Increased self-confidence

There is other research that cites that involvement in music builds numeracy and communication skills. It also builds self-discipline and teamwork skills. It provides students with a community and sense of belonging. Friends made and lessons learned through involvement in music last for a lifetime.

How is it possible to deny students the opportunity to benefit from this kind of training?

How is it possible to justify the cuts being proposed?

Linda Dier, Chair

From: Lisa Humphries Prael
To: Trustees
Subject: For Board meeting agenda today
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:48:25 AM

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Please include this letter in the board meeting agenda package for today's meeting.

Good Evening

I am wondering how many of you listened to music in your car on the way to this meeting? There is a very high probability that the singer, the musicians, the writer, the producer, the music engineer, the sound technician to name a few were exposed to music at a young age through school music programs. But the most important question is, why are you listening? Chances are you are like many of us who had the opportunity to be introduced to music when we were young. Although we may have jobs that are no way linked to music, we find that music is a part of life and has had influence on who we are today as adults.

Music should be a CORE subject just as Math, Science, English, Social Studies and Phys Ed are. Many scientific studies have established that those that are exposed to music at a young age have improved memory, and perceptual and cognitive skills. A recent study showed that during lock down that those that learned a new instrument had an increase in their IQ by 10% (tests taken before and after) vs those that increased exercise (7% increase) and reading (7%).

As a mother of two high school students, I'm devasted at the deep cuts that are proposed to the school music programs. Island Ukulele and middle school band were an integral part of their younger years and fostered a love of music. If these programs didn't exist when they were in grade 6 or 7, I believe that they both would not be part of music in high school.

Island Ukulele involves 100 to 150 children throughout the district in any given year. It is more than just a high school credit music course; it is a community of children from kindergarten to grade 12 making music. Not only will eliminating the one teaching position affect the secondary students' ability to get a credit for a music course but will cause a trickle-down effect whereby many children will not have the opportunity to learn. Island Ukulele, like all music programs is an inclusive and a safe place for our children to grow musically as well as socially. It not only teaches singing and playing an instrument, but also about giving back to the community. Older students help teach younger students and all students are involved in many concerts around Victoria including Senior's homes. By eliminating funding to Island

Ukulele, you are affecting a large number of children directly and many more in the community.

Music is not something that you can cut one year and bring back a few years later, like you could with other classes such as Home Ec or Wood working. Once these children get too old, many will feel self-conscious to join choir and band if they have no experience and they may never know if they have a talent or a passion for music. SD61 will be missing out on a generation of musicians if this happens. So much funding has already been stripped from the programs in the previous years. Many of the musical instruments are donated or bought with money from fund raising as oppose to coming from the district. Please consider maintaining these programs and teachers in their entirety as even partial cuts will have a devasting effect on music for our children in the future.

Sincerely,
Lisa Prael

From: Lisa Okada
To: Trustees
Subject: SD61 Music Program Cuts
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:21:45 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

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For consideration for the Board Meeting Agenda meeting on April 13th 2021:

My son Felix plays tenor sax in the Shoreline Middle school music/band program. It is his first year in the band program.
I am very concerned about the significant impacts the budget cuts to music and band will impact students and the school community in general. I consider band and music programming in schools to be direct and essential learning services to children and youth.

These budget cuts are being proposed at a time when children and youth's mental health is at risk, they have experienced incredible instability over the past year. Music programming has provided some positive stability, community, inspiration and joy. My son has become passionate about music, practicing and getting better. It gives him something to work towards. My daughter is in elementary and has started to learn the recorder. Music is her favorite learning activity and class. I believe music is core and foundational to children and youth's development and wellbeing.

At this time, our children do not access private tutoring or music education outside of school. School is where they can express themselves musically and creatively. My son happily practices his saxophone and was so proud to see his online concert where his friends and peers were able to present their new skills. Over 200 people attended this Zoom concert. Its pride and joy in hard work, practice, excellent music leadership and a strong community.

Please reconsider applying these budget cuts to another area. Taking away this vital and core program for children and youth at such a precarious and scary time will impact them mentally and intellectually and socially.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lisa Okada
SD61 Parent

From: Lori Tanner
To: Trustees
Subject: Don't cut music program's
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 4:22:55 PM

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I want my correspondence included in your surveys and at the board meeting. I strongly disagree with balancing the budget by cutting music for students. It is bad for the development and tone deaf around the pandemic. Do not cut the budget for music in schools
Thanks you

Lorraine Tanner
Victoria, BC

From: loyoung@shaw.ca
To: Trustees
Subject: Keeping music
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:12:45 AM

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Dear Trustees
Please – do your up most to keep music instruction in the schools.
Learning music enhances the lives of the students in so many ways. – please keep it as part of the curriculum.
Please include my letter of correspondence at the next board meeting..
Thank you for your participation in keeping our children educated and healthy.
Sincerely
Lorine Young

From: M. McBride
To: Trustees
Subject: Board Meeting April 13 - Proposed Cuts to Music Programs (Please include my letter in correspondence at today"s meeting)
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:53:28 AM

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Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs. Music also reinforces other skills taught in the classroom, such as math, collaboration, etc.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.
Michele McBride

From: Madeleine Humer
To: Trustees
Subject: re: Proposal to cut music programmes in school district 61
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:01:24 PM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

History remembers civilizations for their culture, the art, music and drama of the people.

I can absolutely appreciate that a $7 million dollar deficit is a very serious position for you to be in as you make plans for a balanced budget for the coming year. But does it really have to be the music programmes that are once more cut from education opportunities for our children?

As a Music Educator for over 40 years, it has too often been the shy, quiet students who have benefitted so much from my programmes, something I hear over and over again as we re-connect once they have become young adults. Students with learning difficulties find that music helped them work through their other subjects, performing in concerts gave confidence to the nervous, while the discipline of learning new skills and mastering a composition with other students taught self-responsibility and teamwork. And it is an experience shared with all children, regardless of their background or present circumstances.

The ability to stand on a stage and perform with professional adult musicians at a high level of musicianship is a unique challenge for young students, something they will remember participating in all their lives. Please consider the importance of these classes for all students and keep the music programmes in the schools.

Sincerely,

Madeleine Humer
Founding Artistic Director
Victoria Children's Choir

From: Mice Albano
To: Trustees; Diane Mcnally; Jordan Watters; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Shelley Green; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; rpayter@sd61.bc.ca; Ann Whiteaker; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Music Education saves lives - No cutting funds for Music Education
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 2:19:08 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Maria Alice Albano, and I am a post secondary instructor, a parent and a community member in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community. My two daughters have benefited immensely from the music program and it was a strong base for their development during their school years. Without music and inclusive education, they would have struggled. Now they are contributing members of society.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global pandemic demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and

over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Maria Alice Albano

Board of Trustees - trustees@sd61.bc.ca
Jordan Watters - jwatters@sd61.bc.ca
Diane McNally - dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca
Nicole Duncan - nduncan@sd61.bc.ca
Tom Ferris - tferris@sd61.bc.ca
Angie Hentze - ahentze@sd61.bc.ca
Elaine Leonard - eleonard@sd61.bc.ca
Ryan Painter - rpainter@sd61.bc.ca
Rob Paynter - rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca
Ann Whiteaker - awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca
Superintendent of Schools: Shelley Green - sgreen@sd61.bc.ca
Deputy Superintendent of Schools: Deb Whitten - dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca
Associate Superintendent: Harold Caldwell - hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca

April 13, 2021

Dear Members of the Victoria School Board,

Re: Proposal to cut elementary and middle school band programs

Can you imagine a world without music? I can't and I don't want to. As I write this letter, I am listening to classical music on CBC, and I can't help but think these very talented musicians began as children playing in an elementary school band.

I am a retired SD #61 secondary school counsellor and I am writing to ask respectfully that you look elsewhere for money saving measures. Please do not cut any SD #61 music programs. They are vital to the social, emotional and intellectual well-being of our young people.

During my 35 years as a counsellor/teacher at Harbour View School, Spectrum Community School, Esquimalt Community School, Lansdowne Junior High and Oak Bay Secondary, I had countless opportunities to witness the huge impact that music had on a very wide range of students, from beginners discovering a new passion to those who would go on to professional music careers. I cannot possibly quantify the benefits for students – those benefits are priceless.

Music in all its forms is so much more than simply a fun elective course for young people. So much more.

Imagine that you are someone who struggles with reading or spelling or math, and suddenly, in beginner's band, you find a place where you not only understand the "language," but you also find success. You learn to read music and develop the physical dexterity to play an instrument, and soon, instead of school being a discouraging place for you, it is a place where you feel competent and successful.

Or, imagine that music is your passion. Your music teacher not only teaches you to play your instrument even better, but also guides and mentors you towards reaching your musical goals. This opportunity is invaluable as such students often go on to professional music careers.

Or, imagine that you would like to learn to play an instrument, but your family cannot afford private lessons. Schools fill a vital role of providing music programs to families no matter their income level.

Every student enrolled in a music program learns the value of self-discipline as they put in their hours of practice. They experience the satisfaction of mastering an instrument. They learn the skills of playing with their bandmates as a cohesive unit. And finally, when they perform on stage with their fellow bandmates, the boost in confidence is a culmination of all of this hard work.

A self-confident student is a student who is prepared to do whatever they want to do after graduation. I believe that grad classes full of self-confident students is a worthy goal of SD #61.

Please keep those musical opportunities alive for the students of SD #61. Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

Marilyn McCrimmon

NB: Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

From:	Jaela Shockey
To:	Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Cc:	educ.minister@gov.bc.ca; grace.lore.MLA@leg.bc.ca; rob.fleming.MLA@leg.bc.ca; murray.rankin.MLA@leg.bc.ca; lana.popham.MLA@leg.bc.ca; mitzie.dean.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Subject:	Vote against music program budget cuts in SD61
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 1:25:21 PM

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To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61:

Our names are Mark Gustafson and Jaela Shockey, and we are parents to two children who fall within SD61 in Victoria, BC.

We are writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61. We both implore you to vote against the proposed budget cuts to the elementary and middle school music programs in SD61.

Our first child is presently in kindergarten at South Park, and our second child will be enrolled when he turns 5. Both will benefit from a brighter future if you vote against the proposed budget cuts to the music education programs.

We feel that it is important for us to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

Making these cuts now will rob the music program of its foundation by the time our kids get to middle school — depriving our future generations of students of options for a rich music education.

These cuts will also take incredible teachers (present AND future) and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

We again implore you to vote against the proposed budget cuts. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

We would like our letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Please write to us to inform us how your decision took into account our comments and request, and how your decision supports elementary and middle school music program enhancements.

Respectfully,

Mark Gustafson and Jaela Shockey

From:
To: Trustees
Cc: Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Music in Schools - please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:25:50 AM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting

Dear SD61 School Board Trustees,

Really?! Again?! With the wealth of quality research supporting music education as beneficial, as propitious, as essential to the growth, development, and education of the whole child, how is it we find ourselves having to advocate for the presence of music in schools of SD61? How is it that you, the Trustees, can be considering a move of such extraordinary negligence to be foisted upon those you are trusted to serve?

Pythagoras, whose famous theorem our middle schoolers will be rehearsing in math class, taught his own students through music and, in doing so, established truths about harmony and acoustics that our middle schools will be rehearsing in music classes.

Plato in *Republic* established a foundational curriculum – the Quadrivium – blending mathematics, astronomy, geometry, and music: staples of today's middle school curriculum.

Boethius, in the 6th century, used music as the basis for understanding concepts of order and chaos, refusing to hear music as a merely acoustic phenomenon, rather holding music as representative of harmony of the natural world.

Johannes Keppler derived his mathematically-correct description of planetary motion using theories of musical harmony, *harmonia mundi.*

Galileo Galilei was instructed in music by his father Vincenzo, the acclaimed music theorist of the Renaissance, and used music to contemplate the processes of time, light, and mechanics.

Albert Einstein famously opined, "Life without playing music is inconceivable for me," and frequently used music as a brainstorming technique.

Thomas Südhoff, 2013 Nobel Laureate in Medicine, writes about his own music education:

I credit my musical education with my dual appreciation for discipline and hard work on the one hand, and for creativity on the other. I think trying to be marginally successful in learning how to be a musician taught me how to be a scientist: there is no creativity if one does not master the subject and pay exquisite attention to the details, but there is also no creativity if one cannot transcend the details and the common interpretation of such details, and use one's mastery of the subject like an instrument to develop new ideas.

(https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/medicine/2013/sudhof/biographical/, accessed 12 April 2021)

There is a common thread: a fundamental understanding that music is part of a web encompassing science, maths, philosophy, creativity, discipline, organization, joy, and aesthetics.

Educators, psychologists, and business leaders of recent decades have picked up on these themes and codified through research the important work of music in the growth of young people.

"Music is unusual among human activities for both its *ubiquity* and its *antiquity*. No known human culture now or anytime in the recorded past lacked music. Some of the oldest physical artifacts found in human and protohuman excavation sites are musical instruments. … whenever humans come together for any reason, music is there: weddings, funerals, graduations from college, [soldiers] marching off to war, stadium sporting events, a night on the town, prayer, a romantic dinner, [parents] rocking their infants to sleep, and college students studying with music as a background. … To ask questions about a basic, and omnipresent human ability is to implicitly ask questions about evolution." (Daniel Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music*, Dutton, 2006, pp. 5-7)

"We humans are a musical species no less than a linguistic one. This takes many different forms. All of us (with very few exceptions) can perceive music, perceive tones, timbre, pitch intervals, melodic contours, harmony, and (perhaps most elementally) rhythm. We integrate all of these and 'construct' music in our minds using many different parts of the brain. … Listening to music is not just auditory and emotional, it is motoric as well. … We keep time to music, involuntarily, even if we are not consciously attending to it, and our faces and postures mirror the 'narrative' of the melody, and the thoughts and feelings it provokes. … Underlying this is the extraordinary tenacity of musical memory, so that much of what is heard during one's early years may be 'engraved' on the brain for the rest of one's life." (Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia*, Alfred Knopf, 2007, p. xi)

"Of all the gifts with which individuals may be endowed, none emerges earlier than musical talent. Though speculation on this matter has been rife, it remains uncertain why musical talent emerges so early, and what the nature of this gift might be. A study of musical intelligence may help us understand the special flavor of music and at the same time illuminate it relation to other forms of human intellect." (Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, Perseus BasicBooks, 1983, p. 99)

"Perhaps the thing that the arts do best, at their best, is open the doors to learning. They open our eyes, our ears, our feelings, our minds. They make us more sensitive and aware. … The arts awaken our curiosity about the mysteries of the intuitive and imaginative worlds beyond the obvious, the crass, the commercial, the simplistic … They invite us to join in adventures that quicken our senses and our minds, that enliven us by exciting our exploratory nature … Through such encounters, children learn to be open to experience …" (Charles Fowler, *Strong Arts, Strong Schools*, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 9-10)

"Finding solutions to our greatest problems requires understanding of human context as well as of code; it requires both ethics and data, both deep thinking people and Deep Learning AI, both human and machine; it requires us to question implicit biases in our algorithms, and inquire deeply into not just how we build, but why we build and what we seek to improve. Fuzzies and techies must come together and the true value of the liberal arts must be embraced …" (Scott Hartley, *The Fuzzy and the Techie*, Houghton Mifflin, 2017, "Author's Note")

Music learning, music education, does not fit neatly into a curriculum.

"… There are general assumptions about the roles art should play in general education. Some school personnel believe art education should exist merely to enhance learning in other subjects. Others think the principal purpose of art education is essentially utilitarian – to sharped and enhance perception, critical-thinking skills, higher-order cognitive processes, and imagination. Still others feel art should have a place in the curriculum because it is a source of knowledge, beliefs, and values about the self and the world essential to an educated citizenry." (Brent Wilson, *The Quiet Evolution*, The Getty Education Institute, 1997, p. 31)

Of course, each of these statements are valid in its way. To these we add coveted workplace skills learned directly from school music making: project management, transfer of concepts and skills between disciplines, collaborative and group work, performance under pressure, public presentation, stage presence, long-range planning, short-term problem solving.

We cannot lose sight of how music manifests early in life and negligently cut off access to quality education to the youngest group of students. We cannot turn our back on an age-old characteristic of human life, and prevent our students having meaningful engagement with music. We cannot succumb to a narrow interpretation of music as an extra, and rob our students of the opportunity to grow individually, socially, and societally through music.

Music has been a part of my life since Grade 6. My husband also. Both my sons would claim the same, beginning at Arbutus Middle School, continuing through Mount Doug. Each of us has a personal and on-going relationship with music, even while some of us pursue careers outside music. Now as my older son contemplates an education for his own young son, he observed that the sonly school class to have any meaning and purpose was Band – this from a Greco-Roman scholar, and grad of MD's Challenge Program. In just the past few weeks, he has mused that that only reason to support public school for his child is music.

Please! Do not take music away from the children of Victoria.

Mary C. J. Byrne, Ph. D.

Flutist, Teacher, Musicologist

www.marybyrneflute.ca

Victoria, BC, CANADA

MRS. MARY H. CLARKE

April 10, 2021

Ms. Jordan Watters, Chair, and
Board of Education Trustees
Greater Victoria School District 61
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria BC V8Z 1E8

Via email: jwatters@sd61.bc.ca
trustees@sd61.bc.ca

Dear Chairperson Watters and Trustees:

It has recently come to my attention that the SD 61 Board of Education is considering the short sited reinstatement of all cuts to funding (in excess of $1,000,000) for music programming in your schools.

As a retired music teacher (31 years Edmonton Public Schools), I urge the Trustees NOT to proceed with these proposed cuts being put forward by your Senior Administration. The proposed miniscule reinvestment of those monies effectively removes support to the young students involved in these programs and will only fund a small block of music for Band 8 in district middle schools. Some of those middle schools have more than 400 students registered in music classes, many of which in a normal year, would have 100+ students studying in each ensemble.

I don't understand how school administrators can decide which "30" students in the school would deserve music and which type of music instruction they should be taught and who will be left behind. Students put their hearts, souls, study time, and practice time into these courses with much vigor. They receive joy at being part of the music, satisfaction and comfort of belonging to a group recognized by their peers, increased fluency in the language of music, all which has been proven to stimulate brain use in other academic subjects (e.g., mathematics and sciences), and music allows a mental release as students express themselves in a non-verbal safe spot. The comfort and sense of optimism that they receive by participation in school music programs provided by experienced Music Teachers provide a sense of continuity, safety and optimism, especially when students are not able to express their emotions in words. Finally, it is well documented that academic progress is greatly enhanced in those that study music.

Please do your part to fully investigate the real harm that will come to your students and their academic and personal success if all proposed cuts are reinstated. I respectfully request that my letter be included in the Board meeting agenda package for the next meeting.

Thank you,

Mary H. Clarke

Mary H. Clarke

From:
To: Trustees
Subject: Please include my letter in correspondence at your next board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:43:21 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.
Access for children to music in schools is something I feel very strongly about. My letter above uses the good wording suggested by Pacific Opera Victoria only because it reflects my heartfelt personal beliefs.
Sincerely,
Mary Mullens

From: Mary Tarbotton
To: Trustees
Subject: Include in correspondence at the board meeting on Tuesday, April 13.
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:31:07 AM

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To the Trustees of School District 61:

I am very concerned that School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. It is beyond my comprehension why music is always targeted for cuts by school boards when it has such lifetime benefits. As a senior I have fought in the past against music education cuts affecting my own children and now it is happening again to my grandchildren.

Studies show that music education improves academic achievement, builds communication skills, develops teamwork and increases engagement in school. Music is a language. It is emotionally powerful. It is creative and social. It builds confidence and skills which enrich our lives.

Please do not cut music programs in our schools.

Mary Tarbotton

From: Mike Teachman
To: Trustees
Subject: for inclusion at Board meeting on April 13, 2021 re: music program cuts
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 7:49:12 AM

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Dear all Trustees and Superintendent,

Today when I was driving around town I noticed all the expensive vehicles being driven - Teslas, BMWs, Mercedes, and thought "wow, this is such a well-off and rich community".

Then I got home and read an email indicating that SD61 is considering cuts to the music program.

No!

Cutting music programs is crazy. Kids benefit so much. They learn as a team. When attending school concerts you see the passion. It is well studied that music helps a young mind to develop, and enhances academic learning.

I know you face tough decisions and don't want to do this. I would never want to be in your position. But, please do what you can to keep these programs.

Once again, we live in a rich community. Surely, we can afford to fund music programs in our education system. If not, it's a very sad state of affairs.

Thank you for listening,

Mike Teachman
Victoria, BC

April 12, 2021

Last night I heard the news of proposed cuts to SD 61 School music programs. I spent a great deal of time adding my comments to the survey, and 'starring' the comments -- after over 300 stars I decided to sign off as time on the computer was negatively affecting me.

All I can picture this morning after hearing that cuts to music programs in SD 61 are being considered, is Tom Ferris sitting in packed auditoriums and witnessing the culmination of months of disciplined effort by students of all socio economic backgrounds and cultural backgrounds working together to present the best of what they can produce for their teachers, parents, caregivers, grandparents, and each other. Have you been to a Lansdowne Middle School grade 8 graduation music concert after these hundreds of students have spent three years singing and playing together? I would assume not, or you could never consider the proposed cuts to the music program.

The majority of music students in my experience (my two children attended Lansdowne Middle School from 2012-2015) found themselves enriched by attending more than one music class. The first call for auditions for a "Men's Choir" in grade 6 saw 40 middle school boys turn up to "try out"!

I don't think I personally can begin to quantify the benefits of participating in a school music program, but I am confident that School Trustees have seen all of the research and experienced it in the faces of the students when they rest their bows, sing the final note, play that rush of the final orchestral, pop music, classical, rock etc. piece.

Both of my sons spent 3 years at Lansdowne and enthusiastically bounced out of bed for early morning rehearsals throughout their three years - choir, band, jazz band, vocal jazz, R & B. I know that the other components of their school day in no way matched the level of excitement and dedication that they had to their music teachers, and to the music program. A gift to parents of the highest order.

The boys are in 3rd year at the University of Waterloo (Math majors...is it true what they say about the correlation between success in academics and music education?!), and both played with the University of Waterloo Jazz band in first year (before heading home when the university closed in 2020). They still recall, with fondness, Mrs. Evans their 'first' choir teacher at Willows elementary, and they both played strings at Willows in the Grade 5 music strings program.

I could write paragraphs of what the Choir, Musical Theater, and Jazz Band meant to my boys as they navigated 'growing up' at Oak Bay High School. I believe that if students do not have an opportunity to begin their musical education in elementary school, and have a strong, vibrant and varied music program in middle school, then many of our kids will never experience the richness of caring adult 'music' mentors, life long friendships, the confidence that comes from practice and performance, and the lifelong presence of a 'song in their heart' to get them through the ups and downs of their lives.

Please, please, please, for the children whom you are entrusted to support, reconsider any and all cuts to the elementary, middle and high school music programs in our district!

While I re-read this letter, tears fill my eyes at the thought that other students coming through our district may be denied the opportunity to experience what my family experienced -- the greatest part of our elementary, middle and high school experience by far, and I sincerely hope that the Board of Trustees will listen to their constituents.

Thank you.

Nancy Mabey

From: Nathan
To: Trustees
Subject: Music Program Budget Cuts
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 5:54:08 PM

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Hello Trustees,
I am currently a grade 10 student at Esquimalt High school. I want to express my concerns about the budgets cuts to middle school music programs.
When I was in grade 6 attending Shoreline Middle school I joined the band program even though I had no previous experience with music. During grades 6, 7 and 8 The music program was the highlight of my school experience not only because it developed my love for music that still persists to this day but also for the social experience it gave me and the countless friends I made while in the program.
By cutting out grade 6 and 7 band programs as well as strings and choir, you will be denying hundreds of students the opportunity to experience music at an young age and develop a bond with the subject and the people they are making music with. I understand that budget cuts need to be made but music is the reason why many students enjoy their time at school.
This email may be too late to be considered in today's board meeting. However, I feel it is important that I express my thoughts anyways.
Thanks, Nathan Skip

From: Nicola Hestnes
To: Trustees
Cc: Jim Kingham
Subject: Please include this email in correspondence for the April 13 Board Meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:13:03 AM

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Members of The Board,

I began my musical journey in middle school. I was a part of the band and chose the flute which I played from middle school all the way to high school. I learned so much from the program and helped built my confidence by working as a team with my classmates as we traveled to festivals and out of the country. Although waking up at 7 am can seem like a chore for a teenager, I enjoyed every moment of it performing music. We were fortunate to have such a supportive and amazing teacher to help us all grow our skills and love for music and really got along with the students and they respected her.

It wasn't till middle school where I was fully able to thrive with the help of music and arts and teachers who believed in me. As well as the concert band, I was involved in my middle school's "Rock Band" playing guitar (and was the only girl) and we would accompany the choir in school performances. Later in high school, I took up other instruments like mandolin and performed in a folk-pop band that was formed with other members of the concert band and we released our first full-length album in 2020. We performed regularly in local venues and we were involved as opening acts for bands like Platinum Blonde, and Prism, who are some of my musical inspirations and was an honour to play on the same stage with these Canadian names. My last year of high school also gave me the opportunity to be cast as the lead role in our school's production of "Zombie Prom", a part of my life that was exciting but challenging as this was my first ever musical. Fort my final school performance, I also performed at my high school graduation ceremony singing lead vocals and on mandolin in 2014, here is a video for reference: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crPvLrha9y8

Currently, I play in the Sidney Concert Band in the flute section and perform as one of their lead vocals. I have been with the band since 2018.

I wouldn't be the same person I am today if music wasn't present in my life. Growing up with a learning disability and ADHD, I had trouble expressing myself as a child and struggled in school academics. I was frustrated and felt I didn't have a purpose. I ask that you please don't cut the school's music programs for short-term gains. Music is an important component for developing strong minds especially at a young age and is a great way to escape stress and build confidence for later on in life. I have so many music teachers in school and who taught me private music lessons to thank for all their support and compassion for helping me become the person I am today.

Yours truly,

From: Nicole Painchaud
To: Trustees
Subject: please include in board meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:20:03 AM

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I see the difference in my grandchildren whenever they attend a music class. They are happier and even joyful to be learning to play
an instrument and to read music. This is a gift for now through Covid and for the rest of their lives. If it only inspired them i their love
of music without continuing to play an instrument, that would be sufficient.
PLease find a way to keep music in the schools. Life is sad enough right now. Their mental health deserves this.

Nicole Painchaud

From: pierre mackenzie
To: Trustees
Subject: Email letter for board meeting, Tuesday, April 13
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:23:42 AM

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Dear Trustees of the Victoria School District
I am a retired French Immersion teacher who has seen how the discipline of learning another language is formative in students. Observably, it was instinctive in them to hear each other, and learn, even from other's errors. They arrived in our school, unknown to us teachers, but like cousins that had always known each other. The FI program created social bonds, and they were a cohort. Music group programs act in the same way, and Music, (we might as well repeat it once again) like learning another language early, is formative to brain development and lateral thinking.
Please make a stand for exceptional education in the Victoria School District.
Cordially,
Pierre MacKenzie
(Doct. en Musique et Musicologie,
U. de Paris IV, Sorbonne)

To school trustees of Greater Victoria School District 61,

I know many of you align with my belief, as well as the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association that a proposed seven million dollar cut to our budget is devastating for not only the youth we support, but also to district staff. I am a new teacher on call in SD 61 and I spent my time at UVic advocating for inclusive schools. It is clear that cutting Educational assistants, school counsellors, meal programs, and essential music/arts programs is in misalignment with the inclusive school philosophy that I was presented when I chose to join this school district.

We are already short in all of these areas. I am on call as a teacher and as an EA so I see everything in all different classrooms every day. Schools like Quadra and George Jay school are at times short six or seven EA's so my schedule bounces around the entire school in crisis management. My practicum school, South Park has one of my dear students with autism without an EA to support him--the position is unfilled for the rest of the school year. This student who needs consistent, regular support by the same person daily is left with only scraps of crisis management support when an extra TOC is available, the VP/principal or occasionally a spareboard EA. These stories are not stand alone. We know that positions across the district go unfilled. We know that there are students who need support who are not designated for funding so when they enter a crisis state they spend time with the principal or simply sent home early, despite the fact that it is their right to an education--their right to be at school.

It is already so difficult to arrange for a child in need to see a school counsellor, as almost no schools have a full time counsellor as it is. If the child is lucky, they will see a counsellor once a week. If they are not lucky, they will not see a counsellor at all. I do not wish to imagine the long lasting negative impacts of severe cuts to essential school counsellors. The meal program cuts speak for itself. It's quite literally taking food out of vulnerable students' mouths.

The middle school music cuts are shocking to me. I know several students personally who love these programs and would not be able to afford music lessons otherwise. I know that music class fosters friendships, community and artistic expression. Why would we stand for the district to take this away from our students?

I urge you all to fight as hard as possible to not have the proposed budget go through. People in the school district that are making over 100k should be taking salary cuts before our invaluable EA's. There must be a better way forwards. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can do anything more. I am very invested in this advocacy work.

Respectfully,
Reegan MacKenzie
UVic, bED
TTOC, Greater Victoria school district

From: ROBIN SUDBURY
To: Trustees
Subject: Email letter in correspondence for the board meeting Tuesday Aug 13
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:31:25 AM

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Dear SD61 trustees and Superintendent,

I am deeply saddened by the proposal to cut funding to elementary and middle school music programs. I urge the trustees and the superintendent to please vote NO to these cuts. I am a singer with the Vox Humana vocal ensemble. My life-long passion of singing stems from the incredible choral program provided at my elementary school, Lampson Elementary. This musical foundation in my earliest years has led me to sing in choirs my entire life. Music for children is a fundamental part of education, shown over and over to promote confidence and ability in other areas of learning. Again, please do not make these cuts. It would be a terrible disservice to children to deny them the chance to make music.

Sincerely,
Robin Sudbury

Ross Gilbert
Parent of 3 SD61 Students
Teacher in SD61

Trustees of the Board of Education
556 Boleskine Rd.
Victoria, B.C., V8Z 1E8
Trustees@sd61.bc.ca

Dear Trustees of the Board of Education:

Although I am an employee of the district, more importantly I am a parent of three SD61 students (grade 11, 9, and 5). I write to you today in that role to implore you to investigate this draft budget more thoroughly and if cuts are needed to take them from other areas that will have much less impact on students.

The announcement of a proposed deficit of $7.1 million and such a compressed time line is unfortunately causing a great deal of angst and anguish in the community. Budgets, projected deficits, and actual surpluses are often a matter of interpretation and can be affected significantly by what money is actually being counted and when it is being counted. I am glad that the process has been opened up for input, and I hope that real significant changes will be made in the upcoming draft to the budget.

Three years ago the Board set aside more than two million dollars in a "moving forward" fund to cover future deficits. Then two years ago the district also set aside just over a million more for the same reason. Last year the district was projecting a four million dollar deficit but ended up with a surplus of over three million dollars, so I assume that the moving forward monies were not touched. I am having difficulties finding this eight million dollars inside the budget documents anywhere, which might just be my inability to navigate them, but there are two items called "Surplus Appropriations" and "Carry Forward" which seem to indicate some savings that are not being deployed into the budget process. I would like to know where that money has ended up and what those two items were. Cutting such meaningful programs as is being proposed for the coming year should not be done if there are other choices that can be made. Last year we were projecting a large deficit and instead ended with a large surplus. If we are using the same process this will likely occur again.

Perhaps I am not reading the budget documents properly and the deficit cannot be negated with just a closer look at the revenues and expense projections or offset with previous savings. If that is the case then the areas that need to be cut should not be programs for students. The proposed cuts are confusing when you consider the often discussed 'Goals' and 'Strategic Plans' of this district. Cutting programs like Middle School Band, Ukelele, Reading Recovery, Educational Assistant supports, and Strings should be the last things that are on the list of consideration by the district. Each of them, in their own significant way help build confidence, skill, community, and healthy students. There are many others who will be extolling the virtues of each of these programs. I will only say that if these cuts continue, my son in grade 5 will have a significantly poorer middle school education that his brother and sister who have come before him.

Most teachers and EAs as well as numerous parents have watched over the last six years the increase in the number of District Principal and Vice-Principal at the district. In those six years, our district has increased from three District Principals and three District Vice-Principals to nine of one and six of the other. These are the most costly members of your employee group, so to have budget proposals that significantly reduce student programs while not addressing the area of ballooning district administrative growth is disheartening and only builds cynicism within your employee groups and the general public. I do note in the budget documents that there are plans to reduce the number of these District Principals by 2.6, but much more can be done. Reverting back to the original number of these position would protect most of the services for students that are proposed to be cut.

By looking at the SOFI documents, you can see that over the last six years the costs for Principals salaries has increased 39% and their expenses billed has increase 71%. Contrast that to the increase in funding for teachers which has only risen 20%. The value for teachers is even less impressive when you note that most of it is due to the Supreme Court of Canada ruling that teacher contract had been illegally stripped. Reducing the increased cost of district administration is an area that needs more consideration.

If spending needs to be cut, there are many other areas away from the students where you could start. Below are some suggestions that are based on the SOFI documents of the district provided for last year as well as from other district documents. Figures are rounded for the ease of understanding.

- Use announced retirements, acting Principal and Vice-Principal positions, and the powers available to you to allow for administrators to return to teaching, to eliminate at least 3 District Principal Positions and 3 District Vice-Principal positions. Basically, take the proposed 2.6 and making it at least 6.0 fte.
    - District Principal **($130,000 + expenses) x (2 or more)**
    - District Vice-Principal **($110,000 + expenses) x (1.4 or more)**

- For all schools with less than 400 students eliminate the position of Vice-Principal and instead use Teachers in Charge when necessary. Vice-Principals are mandated to be paid approximately $20,000 more than the highest paid full-time teacher in the district. Vice-Principals in Elementary Schools have very little admin release time (they teach 90% of the week). Eliminating these Vice-Principal positions would generate approximately $20,000 x 25 schools.

  ($500,000 + expenses).

- For high schools with allocations of 2.0 or lower Administrative time, have only two administrators instead of three. Lambrick Park and perhaps one or two others.

  ($115,000 + expenses x (1) or (2))

- For years teachers have come to the Board to try to have Trustees increase the amount spent on Teacher Professional Development to no avail. In last year's budget this amount was $87,000 which is shared by our 2000 teachers. The district's administrators (I believe there are about 150 of them) had a budget of $115,000 allocated to them last year. If you are serious about saving money instead of cutting programs, perhaps consider reducing their pro-d budget to be on par with teachers. That would yield some other significant savings.

  Approximately (**$100,000**).

- According to the district's own SOFI reports for the district that in 2007/08 Executive Staff for the District was listed as the Secretary Treasurer and the Superintendent. Over the intervening 12 years, we have added two Associate Superintendents, a Deputy Superintendent as well as an Assistant Secretary Treasurer. Again, the elimination of one or more of these positions either through retirement or a return to teaching would free up a significant amount of money.

  ($150,000 + expense x (1) or (2)).

- The trustees should also consider offering teachers who retire to be given the option to remain employed with the district as TTOCs. While most teachers who retire move onto other activities and pursuits, there are some who want to remain connected to the classroom and the school environment. The difference in salary scales is significant between a teacher at the top of our salary grid and the bottom. As a rough estimate, a program like this might save the district $20,000 or more for each retiree who would be encouraged to retire by having this offer extended to them. This would depend on how staffing is calculated, and I do not have a precise understanding of that funding formula from the province. It does bear investigating, however.

  Approximately (**$200,000)**

There are many more areas that could be considered before looking at the cuts that are being proposed by staff at the district. These suggestions above could garner approximately $1,500,000 to $2,000,000 of savings towards the deficit. Cuts do not need to come from programs for students: cuts could come from the ballooning middle and upper management of this district.

I am hopeful that you, the Trustees, will be able to get to the bottom of the actual deficit and financial situation of the district and work hard to cover that deficit using some of the suggestions above or other methods that won't impact student learning conditions.

Thank you,

Ross Gilbert

(Parent of 3 students: Grade 11, 9, and 5)

From: Sammie Gough
To: Trustees
Subject: Cuts to music funding
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:13:24 AM

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Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs. As someone who benefited immensely from school music programs as a student (it literally was one of the things that made high school bearable for me), it saddens me deeply that music is the program that is being cut.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Regards,

Sammie

12 April 2021

Dear Shelley Green, Deb Whitten, Harold Caldwell, and the Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61:

As a parent of two students in School District 61, I am writing to express my deep concern about the proposed budget cuts to the music education programs within our schools. There are so many reasons why it would be a mistake to cut out music, strings, and band programs that it was hard to decide which to focus on in this correspondence. I expect that by now you have received hundreds of letters from community members sharing touching stories of how music and arts education has enhanced their lives, and sometimes even saved lives. I also have some personal stories I could share, but since you are likely already flooded by these, I have chosen to focus on science.

As a health practitioner and researcher, I am well versed in the importance of incorporating scientific research into tough decision-making, to ensure that actions are evidence-based and bring the lowest likelihood of harm. In the area of music and arts education, there is a rich body of evidence demonstrating numerous benefits to children. Children taking music lessons show improved cognitive abilities, including enhanced language mastery, spatial ability, working memory, creativity, and executive functioning.[1,2] Interestingly, a study conducted at the University of Kansas demonstrated that students in elementary schools with higher quality music education programs scored higher on standardized English and math tests compared to schools with low-quality programs, regardless of socioeconomic disparities.[3] Even more important, in my opinion, are the positive impacts that music programs have on children's self-esteem, confidence, perseverance, social connection, emotional well-being, and overall quality of life.[4]

Given the clear evidence that music programming brings a range of impactful cognitive, social, and emotional benefits that help children throughout their lives, I have two questions for you:

1. Why do you consider School District 61 music programs to be unnecessary and dispensable?
2. Have you carefully studied the harms that will result from obliterating the existing music programs?

If you have not performed a detailed analysis of the range and magnitude of potential harms that could come to children as a result of cutting the current music programs, then I submit that you have not done your due diligence in coming to this budgetary decision. Especially in light of the current pandemic, where child and youth stress, mental health challenges, and social

isolation are at an all-time high,[5] it is vital to ensure that any proposed cuts do not exacerbate these risks to a dangerous level.

I implore you to vote against the proposed budget cuts, and allow children and youth in Victoria to continue to reap the wide-ranging benefits that music programs provide. In weighing the clear benefits of these programs against the potential harms of the proposed budget cuts, I am confident you will come to the right decision.

Sincerely,

Sarah McIntosh, MSc

References:

1. Hutchkins, S. The Royal Conservatory of Music. *Music and cognitive benefits.* Toronto, Canada. https://rcmusic-kentico-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/rcm/media/main/documents/learning/rcm-music-and-cognitive-benefits_web.pdf. (see full reference list on p.11)

2. Hutchkins, S. The Royal Conservatory of Music. *When words fail: the not-so-secret connection between music, language, and the brain.* Toronto, Canada. https://rcmusic-kentico-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/rcm/media/main/documents/learning/rcm-when-words-fail_web.pdf. (see full reference list on p.18)

3. CM Johnson and JE Memmott. Examination of relationships between participants in school music programs of differing quality and standardized test results. *Journal of Research in Music Education.* Winter 2006:54(4).

4. Garner, A, Burgess, S and Sturgeon, M. A Literature Review on the Benefits of Music Education: Beyond the Scope of Academics. 2019. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344889981_A_Literature_Review_on_the_Benefits_of_Music_Education_Beyond_the_Scope_of_Academics.

5. Cost, KT, Crosbie, J, Anagnostou, E et al. Mostly worse, occasionally better: impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of Canadian children and adolescents. E*ur Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2021. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-021-01744-3.

From: Nick & Sharon Russell
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts to music programmes
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:51:39 PM

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Please do not cut the music programmes in Middle and elementary schools to reduce your deficit. These programmes are not "frills", but just as essential to students' education as chemistry or mathematics - perhaps more so. Music making is vitally important at all levels of education, and contributes to a desire to remain in school, as well as giving children and youth skills they can carry into their later lives, and possibly even careers.

It astonishes me that at this time, when we know the arts are threatened by our current pandemic, and that they are very important to our overall mental health, you would even consider cutting any of these courses or activities.

I do not speak as a current parent of students, or even the mother of a musically talented child, but I do know that the limited musical education my children received in school, was not wasted. As supporters of the musical arts in Victoria, I fear the effects of your proposed cuts on the already endangered symphony and opera in our community.

Personally I can say that one of the darkest days of this past year was when I learned there would be no concerts or operas or early music all year. In fact, there have been concerts online, and at least one joyful short live performance in October - 4 musicians, 30 or so audience members in a hall that could seat hundreds, for an hour of Handel, Telemann and Bach. But the lift to the spirits of all of us, listeners and performers was much greater than it would seem to warrant. And that is what your music cuts are threatening.

Please include my letter in the correspondence at the next board meeting.

Sincerely,
Sharon Russell,

From: Phil & Sheila
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed cuts in Music in SD 61.
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 2:09:45 PM

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I was saddened to hear of proposed cuts in the Music Curriculum in SD 61. I had many years running the sheet music department of a local music store, and saw first hand the joy that being involved in music brought to young people (as well as older people returning to an instrument in later years).
Not all parents can afford private lessons, not all private music teachers can afford to offer lessons free, not all parents are equipped with the knowledge to teach music (consider the oboe!), or afford to rent an instrument without the discount through a school.
Band, choir, jazz band, solo singing...all this brings joy to the community as children learn and grow..and share their music, eventually, for some, with Symphonies, Operas, rock bands, educators.
Please include this letter as correspondence at the next board music.
This is a very important decision, with ramifications far into the future. Sheila Grigg

Greater Victoria
Youth Orchestra
Yariv Aloni MUSIC DIRECTOR

April 12, 2021

trustees@sd61.bc.ca

Dear SD61 Trustees,

Please include this letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra to urge you to withdraw any consideration of decreasing funding to elementary and middle school music programs in order to help address a $7M deficit. These proposed cuts, which include the equivalent of over 9 full-time music teaching positions across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and other important musical initiatives, will have a long-lasting negative impact not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

We all know that making music together is a way for children and youth to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. At all times, but especially now in these trying times, young people need something to look forward to in their routines. The evidence is overwhelming that music programs provide just what is needed. In addition, making music together gives a wonderful opportunity to learn how cooperation can lead to spectacular outcomes. Moreover, the discipline, patience and precision needed to learn to master a musical instrument pay huge dividends in any number of later, non-musical pursuits.

Please don't deny our children these important opportunities, and please carefully consider your pending actions: they could have vital consequences for many young people and for our culture in general.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila Redhead

Sheila Redhead
Manager, Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra

1611 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC V8W 2L5 ▪ 250-360-1121 ▪ gvyorchestra@gmail.com ▪ www.gvyo.org
CHARITABLE REGISTRATION NUMBER 11894 6995 RR0001

From: Sheridan Scott
To: Trustees
Subject: Reductions to music programmes
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 3:25:29 PM

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I am deeply concerned about School District 61's proposed cuts to the music programmes at school. Music is an essential part of our lives and all children should be given the opportunity to learn more about this important art form, regardless of their family income or situation. Reducing the number of school programmes will discriminate in particular against those children whose families cannot afford private lessons.

Music is an important medium of expression for all our emotions; this is not a time when we should think about reducing access to this outlet. Indeed, the pandemic will leave its mark on our society for some time to come and our children will need to find as many ways as possible to connect with others and share joy: music is an essential part of this.

Please vote against these short-sighted reductions.

Yours truly

Sheridan Scott

PLEASE INCLUDE MY LETTER IN CORRESPONDENCE AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

From: Sonya Smoley
To: Trustees
Subject: Fwd: Music Program Cuts
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:13:57 AM

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***I would like this letter included in the board meeting agenda package please.

>
>>
>> Dear School District #61 Superintendent and associates,
>>
>> I am writing today to voice my opposition to the cutting of the music program for children in schools. I feel this is a very negative step and will only take away opportunities for so many children.
>>
>> Our world has been very insular and negative at best, this past year. I have 6 grandchildren and while 3 are very sports minded and athletic, 2 are not (one too small to judge yet). These two are artistic, excel in music and art and are thrilled with their success in these areas. What do these children then do, when programs are withdrawn? The sharing of these experiences with their peers is their chance for friendships, sharing and the co-operation of working together. These are things we require to become contributing members of our community and society. They will find this a huge gap in their world.
>>
>> We are continually trying to enforce to our youth that they get off their phones, off their devices and get busy. Is this the right message to send when we take away the things that keep them busy? We encourage children to try the things they like, never step back and never give up. What about those that love and thrive in a musical environment? What do we say to them now?
>>
>> I have raised 3 children and navigated the slow erosion of educational programs and standards along with the stress and worry it creates for parents. While money seems to always be the deciding factor, I encourage the district and those making these decisions, to realize that our youth and their future is certainly worth investing in!
>>
>> Regards
>>
>> Sonya Smoley
>> Mother of 3
>> Grandmother of 6
>

From: Tricia Byer
To: Trustees
Cc: Angela La Plante
Subject: Budget Cuts and Safety Concerns
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 3:30:34 PM

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to you about my concerns regarding the budget cut proposals for next year. I understand that you are in a horribly difficult position trying to figure out how to address our deficits. I know there will be no easy fix and I have compassion for the role you must play. However, it was brought up that we are looking at potentially losing our VP support and the equivalent of 4 EAs in reduced hours. Right now, we are juggling EAs in terms of safety, not academic concerns. EAs are being shifted about to deal with students who are at risk of running or need one on one support to function (ie. walk, eat, etc.). Students who need academic support are often simply not getting it.

Before we had the added admin time for our VP, Jeanne Humphries, it felt like triage. Connor McCoy, our principal, was constantly putting out fires and often unable to deal with one serious situation, let alone normal everyday matters, because he was elsewhere in the building dealing with another serious situation. If we lose Jeanne's time and EAs, I fear we will be in a constant state of crisis and there will be serious safety concerns for our students.

I ask that this e-mail be included in the package of correspondence you have received on this topic.

Sincerely,
Tricia Byer
Grade 2/3 Teacher
Quadra Elementary

From: Wesley Haas
To: Trustees
Subject: Music cuts.
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 11:31:24 AM

Thank you for your email. I want to say that I'm not so sure that the board is going to make the best decision. You will be destroying peoples jobs all around victoria. I want you to see everyones opinion and not copy and paste the same message every time. Please read this through.

please include this email in the agenda package.

Wesley Haas.

Dear Education Policy Maker,

I am writing in response to the news of the catastrophic proposal by SD 61 to decimate Music Programs in this school district in the coming school year. Though I concede that managing such a large deficit must be tremendously difficult, I cannot imagine a worse educational solution to this fiscal mess. To utterly dismantle what are arguably the most valuable and far reaching programs which our young people have had the opportunity to explore and thrive in in this school district for decades leaves me shocked and dismayed.

The following is an incomplete list of many of the powerful influences these programs have on our local, provincial, national, and global communities, and therefore, why they should never end up on the chopping block.

- In our professional music community, which includes our local Symphony Orchestra, Opera Orchestra, Victoria Operatic Society, ballet, performers in clubs, Butchart Gardens, and innumerable private and corporate functions, as well as all of the public and independent school music teachers, you would be hard pressed to find a wind or percussion player who would not acknowledge their middle and high school band experience as absolutely crucial to their inspiration and development towards these careers.

- Virtually all of the participants in our many local amateur bands, jazz bands, orchestras, and choirs would claim the same past experience. The reason they are able to, and wish to, join these musical ensembles is because of their earlier school music experience, which taught them the skills required to revisit this participation later in their lives. Also, the vast majority of the individuals who purchase tickets to live music and recordings also would report school music training in their youth. Translation: No school music = no future performers and far fewer audience members!

- With the evolution of a less religious society, young people's only opportunity for choral singing happens in school! There is no experience that matches the feeling of singing together with other people – nothing touches it!

- Studies show, overwhelmingly, the value of these programs to our young people presently enrolled in them include: increased focus and concentration; intellectual stimulation not matched by any other subject, as learning to play a musical instrument requires not only the acquisition of new knowledge, but also, simultaneously, the acquisition of very specific physical skills; demands for creativity and problem solving skills; support of mental health issues; increased fine motor skills; acquisition of a new language; a collective and community mission not equaled by any other school subjects; an active "doing" outlet for many students who need to "do things" in school; a much needed break from screen time, which most other subjects rely on; exposure to various types and styles of music which will offer life long appreciation as both participants and consumers; a much needed

outlet for those for whom music/the arts are the only things which keep them engaged in school at all; at the early stages, an absolutely necessary training ground to make it possible for Secondary music programs to thrive or even survive! I promise you – no Secondary music program will thrive without the groundwork done in the earlier grades!

- Reestablishing programs once they have been cut is extremely difficult. As challenging as it may be, it will take less time to learn a new math concept, learn a new history or science fact, or study a new piece of literature than it will to master playing "over the break" on the clarinet!

- These music programs are run overwhelmingly by extremely passionate, dedicated, selfless, skilled, trained, patient, and tenacious educators.

As far as the overall health and well being of the students in SD 61, these proposed massive cuts would be the worst possible short and long term decision this school board could make. I cannot imagine this being the political legacy this board would want to leave.

In the end, we need to ask ourselves: Do we believe in public education at all? Music Programs should never be seen as "extras" as they are not! They are absolutely essential! This needs to be recognized by not only SD 61 Board Members and Trustees, but by our Provincial Government, Education Ministry, local MLA's, and all local politicians.

I implore all policy makers to reconsider this decision and do everything in your power to save these programs. Now that would be a legacy to be proud of!

Sincerely,

David Enns, MMus, Music Educator fortunate enough to work daily with amazing middle school musicians, performing musician, colleague of incredible educators, husband of musician, parent of musicians and music lovers, son of music lovers, son-in-law of musicians and artists, friend of mindblowing musicians, and concerned human for the future of our community.

From: Michael Randerson & Diana
To: Trustees
Subject: False Economy eliminating music instruction
Date: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 1:59:21 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

My wife and I gained immensely from my musical instruction and participation during our school years. It is so easy to cut this boost to scholastic achievement to balance a budget but the overall loss to the quality of rounded student education will be felt by the Province for many years to come. It is not just a matter of artistic appreciation but the building of a rounded student in all the many academic subjects will become downgraded by cutting off the power of musical education.

There are other areas, such as sports, may deserve less priority than music in deciding where to cut to balance your budget. Sports are important but can be substituted by students using personal initiative, which is not possible for music where instructional expertise is so important.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Michael Randerson

From: nicole McSkimming
To: Trustees
Subject: No cuts to school music programs! (please include my letter in correspondence at your next board meeting)
Date: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 9:21:24 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To whom it may concern,

As a parent of a 7 year old, who is so looking forward to band classes when he is older, I am shocked by the decision to cut music funding/programs in schools here in Victoria. Music is an essential part of every child's schooling, or at least it should be. Victoria is an expensive city to live in, let alone pay for private music lessons. How many households can truly afford to send their child(ren) to private music lessons? Taking music out of schools will deprive the vast majority of children the chance to learn and participate in music altogether. That thought of this possibility is depressing. Think of how depressed children will be, adding that on top of a pandemic year that seems to be never ending, I worry for the mental health and development of all these school aged children.

My music and band class days in elementary and high school were some of my fondest. I still have close friendships with those I met through music and band. We even had a trip to NY to go see music shows and West End Musicals in Grade 12. I went on to pursue dance, working closely with music on a daily basis.

What do most people do on a bad day? They either listen to music or play music. Or get up and dance.

Also, what is up with rushing the survey and having the survey end before the majority of the public were even aware of what was being planned. Loads of people didn't get this info until after the deadline, having not been able to take part in the survey.

Please include this email in correspondence at the next board meeting, I'm hoping this topic will be discussed at several meetings and not decided upon at the first one.

Also, the facebook post that the Victoria Symphony posted included a picture of my son. Because of their free pop up tent at summer events my son now keeps asking for a drum kit. And it was several summers ago now, but trying the drums out that day has stuck in his mind.

Music is lasting and inspiring, but it needs to be learned first. Please do not remove it from school programs.

Sincerely,
Nicole McSkimming

From: Spencer Vatrt-Watts
To: Trustees; Jordan Watters; Diane Mcnally; Nicole Duncan; Tom Ferris; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Ann Whiteaker; Shelley Green; Deb Whitten; Harold Caldwell
Subject: Funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61
Date: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 8:24:15 AM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Spencer Vatrt-Watts, and I am a past student in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development of children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards, not just for the children affected but also for an entire community.

Cutting student-centred curriculum in the midst of a serious global event demonstrates that the board is not putting students first but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day, and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and

over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,
Spencer

From:	Jordan Watters
To:	Helen Money
Cc:	Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject:	Re: Proposed Cuts to Music Programs
Date:	Monday, April 19, 2021 4:05:58 PM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming - as requested, I will include it in an upcoming board meeting agenda package. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates and an FAQ as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Helen Money <>
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:59 PM
To: Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Proposed Cuts to Music Programs

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear trustees,
While recognizing how difficult it is to balance a school budget I have to protest, not for the first time, the proposed cuts to middle school and elementary school music programs.
I am a retired French teacher who taught in and latterly coordinated the challenge program at Esquimalt High School.
Esquimalt had an excellent Band program and for some years a just as excellent choral program. I can attest to the fact that these classes motivated several students to stay in school. However these programs would not have reached their level of excellence without the work of the teachers at the elementary and middle school level. Cutting these programs would severely adulterate high school arts programs.
The Arts play a big part in a person's education; they are not expendable.
They teach concentration, discipline, the always necessary ability to work together, and for many open a window on a whole new world. A world they may choose to inhabit for the rest of their lives. There are not many sports you can play into your seventies and eighties. Math, history other languages are reflected in the music one plays and sings. It is a recognized fact that learning a musical instrument is intellectually stimulating. Skills learned in these classes are transferred to other school subjects.
Having taught many students who were also part of the Band or Choir I must also mention the

security , very important as children grow, to be found in such a group and the sheer joy that such experiences brought them. I remember meeting a young man, not one of our best citizens ,coming out of a rehearsal of a four part French song of which I had been asked to check the pronunciation: "I never thought I'd like this piece " he said" but it's amazing."
Please do not think music is only for a certain type of student; it opens doors for everyone and everyone deserves the chance to have that exposure at a young age.If SD61 decimates the elementary and middle school programs students will lose a valuable opportunity.
I would be grateful if you would include this letter in the Board Meeting Agenda Package.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Money

From: Jordan Watters
To: Megan Thom
Cc: Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject: Re: Music is vital - Save school music programs!
Date: Monday, April 19, 2021 3:54:51 PM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming - I can confirm it will be included in an upcoming agenda package. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates and an FAQ as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Megan Thom <> **Sent:** Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:15 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Music is vital - Save school music programs!

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in the board meeting agenda package.

Dear Ms. Watters,
I teach Physical Literacy and Health at Glanford Middle School. I am writing late on a Sunday night in a state of shock at the proposed cuts to our music program that I have just learned about. As a Physical Literacy teacher I am passionate about fitness activities and sports for kids, but I am also perplexed by why my program is secure while music is on the chopping block year after year.
The district is sending a message to students that music doesn't matter, and if these proposed cuts proceed then you'll be telling hundreds of middle school students that they don't matter either. That the thousands of hours of practice to master their instruments doesn't matter. That the way they have learned discipline and pride in hard work doesn't matter. That their creative expression and potential lifelong hobby or career doesn't matter. That the sense of belonging music programs give them doesn't matter. That it's expendable.

I participated in music programs in this district myself - grade 6 and 7 band at Northridge and the Career Preparation Jazz Program at Esquimalt. This early musical training gave me the skills to make music my whole life, and it is still a central part of my leisure time and my most

treasured relationships. Without music my life would be hollow and I am shocked that you would consider taking it away from the children and youth of Victoria.

Sincerely,
Megan Thom

--
Certified Teacher
http://madamethom.wordpress.com/

Singer Songwriter
http://meganthom.bandcamp.com/

From:	Jordan Watters
To:	Pat Fortin
Cc:	Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject:	Re: Letter to SD61 board chair, trustees and superintendent - please include in agenda for board meeting April 13, 2021.
Date:	Monday, April 19, 2021 4:04:28 PM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming - as requested it will be included on an upcoming meeting agenda package. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates and an FAQ as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | **@sd61schools**

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Pat Fortin <>
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:37 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc: Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; Lisa McPhail <lmcphail@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Letter to SD61 board chair, trustees and superintendent - please include in agenda for board meeting April 13, 2021.

April 11, 2021

Via email: jwatters@sd61.bc.ca, sgreen@sd61.bc.ca

SD61 School Board Chair, Trustees and Superintendent of SD61.

Dear SD61 Chair Jordan Watters, trustees and superintendent,

I am writing in response to the proposed budget for SD61 2021/2022 school year that the board will be discussing on Tuesday April 13th. I would like my letter to be included in the agenda for the meeting.

There is overwhelming scientific evidence on the positive effects of music on our brains and on the developing brains of young children. SD61 has been a model for supporting music in public schools and as the proposed budget document states, on page 7 of the Agenda Package for Tuesday April 13th (attached), the majority of students in SD61 are 'very successful'. According to numerous parents in the district, current teachers, and students themselves, music in schools is what keeps students engaged and wanting to attend school. We have all heard many stories of students who found music to be the safe, creative outlet in schools that builds community and self-esteem while giving them the joy of making music in a group. Music in public schools ensures access to music education for all students in the district, not just those with the means to seek out private music lessons. It follows that the music programs in SD61 are a large part of the success that students are showing. Since the priority of the proposed budget is to focus on student success (again page 7), removing programs that are likely the reason many students are 'very successful' does not make sense.

It is difficult to imagine that this proposed budget would consider eliminating strings in elementary school, band in grades 6 and 7 and strings and choir in grades 6,7 and 8. It is extremely difficult to imagine that the board would consider these cuts **THIS YEAR**, when the pandemic and other global crises have created anxiety and depression in youth everywhere. Music is needed now, more than ever for the community, joy and mental health benefits for students. It is extremely unfortunate that the board considering such cuts is creating more anxiety in children who need support now, not extra reasons to be concerned. Just look at the survey posts, student protests and social media posts. Shame on you for creating this situation. As on page 8 of the Agenda package, you need to know who your students are, what they need.

I would like the board to explain details in the proposed Superintendent budget such as on page 5 of the Agenda Package (Shift) – Is it true that most of the projected deficit for the upcoming year would be due to the decision to change the past practice of using the previous year's surplus as part of the new year's balance? If so, why would you pick THIS YEAR, a year of huge stress on students and families, to make this type of decision, just to 'live within our means'? This may make sense to the accountants but in today's world, decisions need to be made to support our students and families now. Any cuts needed to the budget should come from areas that do not impact students directly. Allow teachers to continue to do the wonderful work they are doing and allow students to continue to be successful, despite things happening in the world that are out of our control.

I have many other questions about the proposed budget details but will focus on a few:

- Eliminating music blocks from elementary and middle schools – who will make up those blocks? Will other teachers be needed to cover those blocks by teaching other subjects? Are the savings listed for eliminating music teachers then accurate?
- Page 60 of the Agenda package – Revenues are up by almost $3 million, MOE operating grant is up by almost $5 million. Investment income reduced by $700,000 – why? If Revenues are up, why can't a balance be found without cuts to programs?
- Page 59 - District administration budget increases by almost $275,000 while a $1 million reduction in instruction is listed. Shouldn't student-based programs be more important than administration, especially during today's stressful times?
- Page 59 - Why is $1 million transferred to capital assets?
- Page 61 – what are the Services that have increased in budget by $1.5 million?
- Page 61 – Does professional development and travel really need an extra $50,000 next year?
- Page 69 – trustees' budget increased by $11,038. Why?

Thank you for your time. I look forward to a revised budget that is centred on students, keeping music programs that benefit all.

With serious concern ,

Patricia Fortin

Parent, Community member

Cc: dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca
nduncan@sd61.bc.ca
tferris@sd61.bc.ca
ahentze@sd61.bc.ca
eleonard@sd61.bc.ca
rpainter@sd61.bc.ca
rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca
awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca
hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca
lmcphail@sd61.bc.ca
dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca

Dear Superintendent, Associates and School Board Trustees of SD61,

I am writing you this letter to address the proposed 2021-2022 budget for School District 61.

As needed for any good debate I need to define my own biases in this matter.

I was the tuba player in my grade 7 and 8 bands. My time as a tuba player ended when I attended my first festival. The adjudicator was the first person to inform me I had - for all my time as a tuba player - been playing off by an entire octave. This was an embarrassing experience for a grade 8 student.

I have gone on to pursue a career in Software Engineering, and married my wife (a middle school music teacher in SD61). Both of us are alumni from the University of Victoria. Together we have 4 children, two of whom are very excited about some of the music programs SD61 is considering discontinuing.

Over the past decade, I have been a chaperone on many music trips. As a result, I have not only had the pleasure of seeing my children's response to the joy of playing music, but also the value it has to many young people. The teamwork and camaraderie of a music ensemble builds relationships and self-confidence within its members. My eldest son credits the grade 6 Choir and Strings programs for introducing him to his current peer group.

From a logical perspective, I am confused by the superintendent's proposed budget.

SD61's Mission and Vision are as follows:

Mission: "We nurture each student's learning and well-being in a safe, responsive, and inclusive learning community."

Vision: "Each student within our world-class learning community has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations."

If this budget passes, we will need to amend the Vision to add: "except for musical aspirations".

SD61's 3rd stated goal of their strategic plan is (as of June 2020):

"Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support all learners' physical and mental well-being."

A musical education is the best way to achieve these goals. Music classes not only allow all students to take part, but also creates a team atmosphere. This facilitates students learning from one another, and encourages them to strive together. It also reinforces the basics of language and mathematics.

The most incredible thing about music is its ability to cross borders and language barriers. The treble clef scale is the same in all countries. As an engineer, this is an unheard of feat. We can't even agree on a system to measure things.

I do not know the enrolment numbers across the district, but my eldest son attends Cedar Hill Middle school, where my wife also works. The student body enrolment in the music program in pre-COVID years has been nearly 75%. In the 2019-2020 school year SD61 had 4309 students enrolled in middle schools. If we estimate 50% enrolment in music programs, that is roughly 2154 students. None of whom will be given an "opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations" next year.

This year has been particularly hard on the mental health of many students, including my children. Cedar Hill - where my son attends, and my wife works - has had 3 COVID-19 exposures following Spring Break. Attendance to school has dropped since then, as people attempt to protect themselves. Yet both my wife and son can attest that some students have come to school only to attend music class. What does that tell you? It tells me that music is seen as so essential to the mental health of our students that families will risk exposure to COVID-19. Once again I would like to point to the strategic plan of SD61 Goal #3:

"Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support all learners' physical and mental well-being."

The proposed budget does not fall in line with SD61's strategic plan. Rather it seems to be a directed attack on a program that has been of great benefit to the community, families, and students. Not to mention a program that by definition crosses cultural and ethic boundaries. I would request the board reject this budget proposal.

Thank you for considering my letter,
Patrick McKnight

From: Jordan Watters
To: Tanya Binette
Cc: Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman
Subject: Re: Please prioritize funding for music programs (at all levels of school!) - Do NOT cut middle school music programs
Date: Monday, April 19, 2021 3:07:07 PM

Hi Ms. Binette,

I can confirm your letter will be included in an upcoming board meeting agenda package.

Thank you,
Jordan

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Tanya Binette <>
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:43 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; ahentz@sd61.bc.ca <ahentz@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter

<rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc: Tanya Binette <tmbinette@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Please prioritize funding for music programs (at all levels of school!) - Do NOT cut middle school music programs

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Resending: **Please include my letter in the upcoming board meeting package**

On Apr 11, 2021, at 9:59 AM, Tanya Binette <> wrote:

Dear SD61 trustees and superintendents,

I am writing to request you to reevaluate any thoughts you have regarding cutting funding to music programs in SD61 schools.

In the midst of a global pandemic, talk of increased anxiety in children (and in everyone) has been at the forefront. We are also in the midst of other crises in Greater Victoria (overdoses, homelessness) that are tied into mental health. You have a challenging job because not only is there an immediate need to deliver education safely to children in the midst of the pandemic, but the root cause of the mental health challenges in our society may be effected by the tools provided to our children to deal with anxiety and to find their happiness internally.

There is a lot information available to address how music helps alleviate anxiety and helps overall well-being and I trust that you are referring to this research when making any decisions to remove funding to music programs - so I will speak from personal experience.

I have 2 children attending school in SD61, grades 3 and 5. The one in Gr 3 is looking forward to participation in the strings program as soon as she can, it is a landmark that the kids all look ahead to when in the younger grades. The one in Gr 5 has already decided that he wants to be in band in middle school and has upped his at-home music practice so that he'll qualify to pursue percussion in band next year. In these times where there is less and less to look forward to, I can't adequately express my sadness on paper that they might lose these highlights! Both children take private music lessons and will continue this music education, but there is nothing like the feeling of making music in a group, with your peers, and these school programs allow that experience but also EQUALITY so all children have equal opportunity to be part of this incredible experience.

I come from a long background of music that included private instruction and school programs. I can't imagine not having had access to the school programs. I learned new instruments and formed an entirely different peer group that was based on a love for music. I have heard many parents of middle school children

say how their children find identity through the music programs: are you a band kid or a strings kid? I was a choir kid. Having choir friends that were quite separate from my other friends carried me through tough times in middle school and high school where I was heading down the "wrong path" with some friends, but always had the music group to hold me accountable/be there for me. Similar to a sports team but since my talent was in music and not sports, the music was my outlet. This carried through in University days and it was due to school music programs that I achieved a level of competency that provided the opportunity to choose between music and science in undergrad. Without music, I would have had nothing at school that "spoke" to me. I would have been lost as I hear many parents are feeling that their talented and gifted "band kids" will be without that outlet. I wouldn't have had an outlet that lowered my heart rate when I was anxious, something that made me feel a "high" without needing to put anything in my body.

Please take some time to listen to some music when you consider budget decisions. Whether it is popular music from when you were in middle school or a video recording of some classical music masters (I always like some Yo-Yo Ma), I challenge you to take 5 minutes to calm your mind and see what emotions that music evokes. We need musicians in our lives and this starts with children having an opportunity to make music early. And we ALL need music in our lives to help us deal with whatever makes us anxious.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Tanya Binette

From:	Jordan Watters
To:	Tricia Anvik
Cc:	Victoria Hanley; Kelly Gorman; Ryan Painter; Rob Paynter; Tom Ferris; Nicole Duncan; Angie Hentze; Elaine Leonard; Ann Whiteaker; Diane Mcnally; Shelley Green; Kim Morris
Subject:	Re: Music Budget cuts
Date:	Monday, April 19, 2021 3:59:48 PM

On behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your letter advocating for music programming - as requested it will be included in an upcoming board meeting agenda package. We recognize and appreciate the important role music plays in our school communities and are grateful to you for sharing your experience and perspective with us.

As a part of the budget process, we have to examine every facet of the organization to understand our priorities in relation to our Strategic Plan (linked below), struggling learners, and our funding shortfall for the 2020-21 year. The savings and reinvestments presented in Draft 3 of the budget are considerations – no decisions have been made at this time.

We encourage all our parents, staff and students to participate fully in the budget process and provide feedback so the Board can make the best decisions possible for our students. You can follow the budget page under the "Financial" tab on our website for additional updates and an FAQ as this process moves forward: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/financial/

Our Strategic Plan is available here: https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/10/GVSD61_StrategicAndOperationalPlan.pdf

Thanks again for taking the time to write. We appreciate your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jordan Watters

Jordan Watters (she/her)
Chair, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 778-977-2309
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

I acknowledge with gratitude and respect that I live and work on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

From: Tricia Anvik <>
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 10:19 PM
To: Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Music Budget cuts

To: Shelley Green, Associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the
Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Tricia Anvik and I am a parent of three boys that have taken or are currently enrolled in the strings program in an elementary school, strings and band in middle school and attended a different high school's string program during after hours just to continue with strings in High school here in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music in School District 61.

My boys have thoroughly enjoyed the music programs at Northridge, Glanford and Esquimalt High School. I feel that it is important for young learners to be able to study music at an early age. It provided them with a more rounded education as there is more to life than reading and math. My

children have used these musical experiences to spring board into other musical studies and instruments. I am worried that by taking music away from elementary and middle schools until grade 8 will reduce the number of students willing to even take these musical options.

I am opposed to the idea of cutting funding in the music programs especially in elementary and middle school. Please consider voting against these budget cuts.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tricia Anvik

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: Victoria Hanley
To: Kelly Gorman
Subject: FW: Music Education
Date: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 8:09:04 AM

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correspondence

From: Alice Maundrell <>
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 6:18 PM
To: Trustees <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>; Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>; Budget <budget@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Music Education

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

To Shelley Green, associates, and the School Board of Trustees for the Greater Victoria School District 61,

My name is Alice Maundrell and I teach middle school band in Fort St. John, British Columbia. I am aware that SD61 is considering cutting various elementary and middle school instrumental music classes and choir in a response to budgetary constraints. I want to convince you to consider other options.

I'd like to take a moment to tell you a little bit about myself. I grew up in Campbell River and was very fortunate to participate in both middle school and high school band programs. I am also the sibling of someone who has exceptionalities. My sibling successfully participated in music programs but struggled in many other areas of their academic and social life. This negatively impacted my family and myself in ways that I cannot succinctly express to you today.

As a result of my upbringing, I pursued a bachelor's degree in music education. Simply because music was sometimes my only source of joy during my most turbulent times. Afterwards, I pursued a master's degree in special education. I desperately wanted to understand why my sibling had to struggle in our education system and I wanted to make the world a better place for kids like them.

My final master's project focused on the study of resiliency. I specifically looked at the work of Emmy Werner and her 32-year-long longitudinal study, which clearly explains the characteristics of resilient children. It also outlines various protective factors such as: being able to connect with one good friend, participating in an extra-curricular activity (to foster positive self-efficacy in a non-academic area), and having a consistent positive non-biological adult role model. Hopefully you can see how this outlines a music classroom to a tee.

In contrast to other areas of education, the role of a music teacher is highly unique. Rather than seeing cohorts for one year at a time, one semester at a time, or one class at a time, they observe cohorts progress through their educational journey over multiple years. A music teacher typically sees entire cohorts of students anywhere between 3-6 years (or more). For many students, music classrooms are a beacon within their school. During a global pandemic where an entire generation of children have faced adversity, taking away funding from music programs would be devastating and negligent at best.

My music educator colleagues may present various studies illustrating that music makes you smarter. Although it may be true that there is a correlation between participating in music and higher academic performance, I believe that the real truth in the matter is that music provides students with the resiliency skills needed to perform well in other academic areas and life.

During my time as a graduate student, I unfortunately didn't find the answers I was looking for regarding my sibling. However, I found the answers I needed about myself and how I became the person that I am. If it weren't for music, I would have never been in a position where I could even consider the pursuit of graduate studies. There aren't enough words to express how truly thankful I am for every single music teacher I had. After some time away, I came back to music education as my main career choice.

I'm aware that you may tell me that SD61 matters are not relevant to me as someone who neither works in SD61, has children in SD61, or even lives in that catchment area. However, the budget choices you make will have ripple effects across our province. If a well-established school district in Victoria can make these budgetary choices, what does that say about my job security as a band teacher in a rural part of British Columbia? If this can happen in Victoria, it can happen anywhere. Furthermore, what can be said about a secretary-treasurer who diminishes years of academic investment to a "music club?" Where will undergraduate music teacher candidates at UVic go to do their observations? What about the extended care facilities that have come to appreciate elementary and middle school ensembles, or the economic impact on local industry partners like Tapestry Music, Long & McQuade and Tom Lee Music? These choices you have to make are further reaching than your students.

I request that you reconsider the budgetary choices in regard to music education in SD61. As

well, I highly recommend you spend time looking at the work of Emmy Werner and her study on resilience. It tells you all you need to know about making the right choice for your students and community.

Respectfully,

Alice Maundrell, B.Mus (2014), PDPP (2015), M.Ed (2017)

*Please include this letter in the board agenda meeting package.

From: Victoria Hanley
To: Kelly Gorman
Subject: FW: Is it too late to stop the School District from causing this disastrous clear cut?
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 1:13:54 PM

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correspondence

-----Original Message-----
From: <>
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 1:06 PM
To: Trustees <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Is it too late to stop the School District from causing this disastrous clear cut?

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next Board meeting.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

The Arts also create a mental network in which all persons learn to interpret and problem solve as individuals, and then also gain the ability to work as a team to create something larger and fuller.
These skills learned from the Arts are simultaneously valuable in succeeding in STEM skills.

Bonnie Helm-Northover

From: Victoria Hanley
To: Kelly Gorman
Subject: FW: SD61 Budget Cuts to Music Programs
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 8:23:04 AM

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correspondence

From: Emilia Vozian
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2021 6:54 PM
To: Victoria Hanley <vhanley@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: SD61 Budget Cuts to Music Programs

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Vicki Hanley,

First of all, I'd like to express my deep gratitude for the SD61 education I have been receiving as a middle school student; particularly the musical opportunities, which is why I was horrified when I learned about the proposed budget cuts.
My message is this: please do not cut back on music programs. They are a critical, integral part of our schools. Music forms a close community where many students belong. It is a passion, an art, a joy for the spirit. Whether it is something students do for fun, or the career they aspire to pursue, the benefits of music are innumerable: students learn dedication, discipline, self-awareness and control, personal expression, the power of uniting in collaboration with others, and important lessons about themselves as individuals.

A music education in itself is an enriching life experience (with benefits ranging from the mind, to health, to learning...there are few things that stimulate the brain like music does), thousands of scientific and academic studies have proved this with incredible data that is worth looking into.

As a grade 8 student, I have been a part of almost all offered music programs since elementary school. From singing to band to strings, music is one of the best parts of my education, and life. It is the reason I am excited to go to school every single day. The reason I wake up early every morning to join my peers in the gift of having a music program. No matter how tired I may be, the challenges I am faced with, or the emotions I feel: I know that no matter what, once I set up my chair and music stand, everything will fall into place and will be forgotten as I play; even if just for a 45min class. It centers me, helps me recharge, and focus in other classes. Berthold Auerbach's quote really resonates with me: *"Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life"*. Music is very important to many students' overall mental health. In a world of ever-rising virtual technology, music is a practice of hands-on mindfulness that must be part of education. Furthermore, music in schools provides opportunities for families who cannot afford private lessons.

Not only this, music brings me so much joy! Not just me but other students, the school, and community. Connections are fostered and life-long memories are created. My music teachers are people I really respect and look up to, some of my best mentors. Their passion and care is an inspiration; they do so much and open many doors for students. The thought of losing them

or reducing their potential is just saddening.

I have shared my experience, but I guarantee that many, many students can clearly attest to the importance of music as a part of our education. I repeat: music is a critical, integral part of our schools that so many care about. I have contacted you because the loss that future students (such as my younger sister, who can't wait to join music groups next year in middle school), will unknowingly experience will be tremendous, should the district continue with the proposed budget. Moreover, nearly completely omitting music from elementary and middle schools will leave its heavy mark on high school music education as well; seeing as students will have minimal prior exposure to music. It pains me deeply and disappoints me that they may not be as lucky as I was to have the beauty of the creation of music offered in their early lives as growing individuals. I cannot imagine my life without music; my love for it grew predominantly because of the possibilities I was offered at school. I truly hope many more students will have the chance to have music as a part of their future.

I understand you must be in a difficult situation, however I must respectfully implore you to carefully consider the severely devastating impact taking away music will have on the district; especially students. Please, please do not ignore the value music has in our education.

If desired, you may use this letter in an agenda package.
Thank you, sincerely,

Emilia Vozian
A SD61 student, and musician
"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything." - Plato

GARY KARR

April 10, 2021

Greater Victoria School District Board of Education
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC
V8Z 1E8

To the Greater Victoria School District Board of Trustees:

It has recently come to my attention that the Board of Education is considering cutting funding to music programming in excess of $1,000,000.

As a property/business owner in catchment area for this District, I urge the Trustees NOT to agree with these proposed cuts being put forward by Senior Administration. The proposed miniscule reinvestment gives little support to the multitude of our young students involved in these programs. The proposed reinvestment will only fund a block of music for Band 8 middle schools in the district. Some of our middle schools have more than 400 students registered in music classes, many of which in a normal year would have more than 100 students in each ensemble.

How can you feel comfortable asking school administrators to decide which "30" students in the school deserve music and which type of music instruction should be taught? Students put their hearts, souls, energy, study time (practice) into these courses and receive in addition to increasing fluency in the new (to them) language of music, the joy of being part of the music itself, the satisfaction and comfort of belonging to a group recognized by their peers, and the mental release of being able to express themselves in a non-verbal medium. (etc. – I'm sure your ideas will be better than mine)

It is this safe spot and the comfort and sense of optimism and belonging, thoughout all of the upheaval that came upon students in the last 2 years, provided by the District Music Teachers, who themselves may have been regularly asked to cross cohorts, that helped a great deal in providing students with a sense of continuity, safety and optimism, when students were not able to express fears in words.

Please do reinstate ALL of the proposed cuts.

Sincerely,

Gary Karr

From: Victoria Hanley
To: Kelly Gorman
Subject: FW: response to major cuts in elementary and middle school music programs
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 9:07:27 AM

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correspondence

From: Iris Styran Allen Reynolds <>
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 8:05 PM
To: Trustees <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: response to major cuts in elementary and middle school music programs

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Iris Styran

From: Jack McQueen
To: Kelly Gorman
Subject: Outrageous Music and Gifted Budget cuts
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 4:08:34 PM

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear Ms. Gorman,

My name is Jack McQueen. I'm an 8th grade student at Arbutus Global Middle School. First I'd like to say, I am very grateful for the high quality education that SD61 has provided. I have taken part in: four bands, two choirs, one stringed orchestra and two CBC Music Class Challenge submissions. In light of the global pandemic and its impact on our economy, many businesses and associations alike have had to make budget cuts. I understand it's always a challenge to make big decisions; with that being said, cutting most music programs in elementary and middle schools will inevitably have dire effects on dozens of schools and thousands of students. Music is a crucial part of everyone's life in some way or another. Taking away music ensembles in middle and elementary schools will make it difficult for families who can't afford private music instruction, but still want their children to get involved with the music community. . If children are never exposed to the creation of music, they won't get the chance to develop the love for the beauty music creates. Music is more than learning notes and rhythms. Students learn: dedication, teamwork, discipline, control and most of all they learn about themselves, who they are as a person and musician.

Should these budget cuts be approved, there will be no Grade 6 and 7 band in middle schools across the district. The point has been made that the Grade 8 band program will focus on accelerating the learning and preparing students (who are interested) for high school band. A single year of band is not enough to prepare students for success in high school ensembles. Music programs across the district will lose quality and teachers will lose enthusiasm.

In a world where technology is dominant in many settings, music is one of the few things left that doesn't require technology. We need to hold onto this. As we continue to emerge from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we need music and our music teachers more than ever. 1 in 4 middle school students suffer from anxiety and the truth is many of these students have been suicidal at one point or another. Music has brought thousands of people back from trying times. Music and our music teachers have always been there for us when we need them. Instead of nearly omitting them, we need to stand together and fight for our music teachers. I have insurmountable respect for the music teachers at my school and would be devastated if they lost their jobs; not just for myself, but for my younger sister and the future generations that will lose the opportunity that I was lucky enough to receive.

Draft 3 of the budget cuts include cutting the gifted program along with gifted teachers, across the district. The gifted cuts only account for $350,501 (or 4.9%) of the $7,143,813 deficit. Despite the fact that the gifted program accounts for a small portion of the district's budget, that doesn't mean we should abandon our students who are designated as gifted. I have received this designation and there are many other students in the district who have the same designation. We need the gifted program and the experienced gifted teachers. The program cannot simply be handed off to classroom teachers and administration staff. Gifted teachers have experience teaching gifted designated students; and therefore, we learn more effectively.

Instead of making drastic cuts to music and gifted programs, consider balancing the budget cuts between: Tech Ed, Home Ec, Art and other exploratory courses. The programs listed have importance in our lives, but not as big of an impact as music. Music is a part of everyone's life, no matter if you're a flautist, or you enjoy listening to music once in a while. The skills you learn in exploratory courses are important, but these skills can be acquired later on in life, for example in high school. It's possible to learn music later on in life, but you don't get the value of being a middle school musician; the sense of community and the teachings: Dedication, Teamwork, Discipline and Control. I insist that you reconsider the repercussions these budget cuts will have on our students, teachers, family members and the broader community.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If desired, you may use this letter in an agenda package

Best regards,
Jack McQueen

From: Victoria Hanley
To: Kelly Gorman
Subject: FW: SD61 Budget Cuts - FY 21/22
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 9:16:20 AM
Attachments: image001.png
image002.png
image003.png
image004.png

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correspondence

From: Budget <budget@sd61.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 8:08 AM
To: Victoria Hanley <vhanley@sd61.bc.ca>
Cc: Kim Morris <kmorris@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: FW: SD61 Budget Cuts - FY 21/22

This was requested to go into the agenda.

Lisa McPhail
Manager, Communications & Community Engagement
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Office: 250.475.4103
Cell: 778.679.5049
www.sd61.bc.ca | @sd61schools

Greater VICTORIA School District One *Learning* Community

From: Jessica Truswell <>
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 8:57 AM
To: Budget <budget@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: SD61 Budget Cuts - FY 21/22

I forgot to request that the below email be included in the agenda package for the next meeting.

Thank you,
Jessica

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

On Sat., 17 Apr. 2021 at 5:36 p.m., Jessica Truswell

<> wrote:

Good morning,

I, like much of the Victoria population and beyond, am writing to you in regards to the budget cuts that were announced last week. Usually, I can whip off a letter in a matter of hours and would have it sent off the day of the announcement, but I have been unable to put pen to paper on this one. Not because I can't think of anything to say, but because there is too much...and it all feels like stating the obvious. I can't figure out what to say to someone who believes that this budget is in any way acceptable. It has kept me up nights. Like trying to reason with someone who doesn't believe food is necessary. Where do you start?

I could appeal to you as the mother of a grade six child who has suffered from anxiety her entire life and whose transition to middle school has been awful, whose only light in this dark year has been music. Who loves her cello like a friend. Who has been having random outbursts and crying spells since this was announced. Whose response to hearing that music might be cancelled was "well, then, I'm not going back to school" in all seriousness.

I could tell you about my younger daughter in grade three that has been talking about grade five strings since kindergarten and has her heart set on playing the viola.

I could appeal to you on behalf of the single parents and low income families that will not be able to replace this program with private lessons. I could explain the inequity that this budget creates, leaving music to the rich.

Or I could tell you about all the studies that confirm the mental, emotional, and academic benefits of music.

Perhaps I can appeal to from my role as a Senior Financial Analyst and tell you that it makes no sense to change accounting methods, creating additional pressure, in an already pressured year. That it is crazy to make permanent cuts in response to a temporary pressure. That legislation can be changed, that funding can be requested during a global crisis. That the music program cuts make up half of one percent of the total budget. Half of a percent. That a cost/benefit analysis would tell you that music is the last program you should cut. That when looking at the year over year comparison of budgeted revenue and expenses, the change is not that big. That without Covid or the accounting change, this small remaining pressure could be covered off with minimal impact to the children you are meant to protect. That the logical thing to do would be to delay the accounting change until revenues return and then spread it out over several years to minimize impact. That Covid relief, or the ability to run a deficit for a couple of years post covid, should be fought for.

I could write an entire book with a chapter for each of these things, but other people have already said it, and better then I can. All I can do is lend my voice to the chorus of voices trying to explain something that should be obvious: music in schools is not "extra" or "engrained"; it is necessary to raise a civilized, healthy society.

In many of the middle schools, these programs serve 75-80% of the school population. I know at Rockheights and Shoreline this is the case. Demographically, these are two of the lowest income schools in Victoria and many of these families will not be able to provide music for their children outside of school. And for those families that can provide private

lessons, those do not replace the experience and learning that comes from playing in an ensemble. At Shoreline, Mr. Leeson runs three levels each of strings and band, as well as jazz band and choir and does it all on .75 of an FTE. You have a three quarter position that manages to run eight individual programs that serve 80% of the students. If that's not value for money, I don't know what is? And you would cut seven of those eight programs to save half an FTE? Half?!

The suggestion that strings, band, jazz band, and choir can be replaced with a single exploratory or "music club" is absurd. That an instrument can be mastered in a couple months a year or that music teachers should volunteer their time to an after-school club is insulting. Music is a second language and in order to master it, it must be started at the earliest possible age. By grade 8, kids are worried about fitting in, being cool, what their friends think and being accepted. They are not likely to jump into a new activity with a very steep learning curve that they have never tried before. You need to get them while they are young and brave and willing to try anything. That is why there is an 80% participation rate in middle school music, which is much higher then there ever was in the junior high model of grades 8-10, where band was considered "nerdy", something for "band geeks". Without that early start, music in all upper grades will also see a reduction in participation, eventually leading to a weak and ineffective music program district wide.

No music programs should be cut, not strings, not band, not choir, not jazz band. Each provides something different and important that each child will connect with differently. For one, their voice is the instrument of choice, for another, the cello. I don't care what 5 other districts are doing (out of 60). Do better, be better. Be the district others strive to be, not the one shooting for the lowest common denominator.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jessica Truswell

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

From: Victoria Hanley
To: Kelly Gorman
Subject: FW: Music Education saves lives - No cutting funds for Music Education
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 8:21:35 AM

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correspondence

From: Maria Marquez
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2021 4:53 PM
To: Trustees <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>; Jordan Watters <jwatters@sd61.bc.ca>; Diane Mcnally <dmcnally@sd61.bc.ca>; Nicole Duncan <nduncan@sd61.bc.ca>; Tom Ferris <tferris@sd61.bc.ca>; Angie Hentze <ahentze@sd61.bc.ca>; Elaine Leonard <eleonard@sd61.bc.ca>; Ryan Painter <rpainter@sd61.bc.ca>; Rob Paynter <rpaynter@sd61.bc.ca>; Ann Whiteaker <awhiteaker@sd61.bc.ca>; Shelley Green <sgreen@sd61.bc.ca>; Deb Whitten <dwhitten@sd61.bc.ca>; Harold Caldwell <hcaldwell@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Music Education saves lives - No cutting funds for Music Education

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

My name is Maria Sant`Anna Marquez, and I am a vocational counsellor, a parent and a community member in Victoria, BC. I am writing to you regarding the upcoming vote regarding funding for Music and Inclusive Education in School District 61.

I feel that it is important for me to state that the benefits of Music Education in schools cannot be disputed. Music Education is crucial for the social, emotional, intellectual, and overall cognitive development in children and young people. Restricting access to these benefits and supports at any level in a modern education system is a step backwards not just for the children affected, but also for an entire community. My two daughters have benefited immensely from the music program and it was a strong base for their development during their school years. Without music and inclusive education, they would have struggled. Now they are contributing members of society.

Cutting student centered curriculum in the midst of a serious global pandemic demonstrates that the board is not putting students first, but instead is more interested in serving themselves and funding positions that do little to impact the everyday lives of students in their schools.

The areas put forward for reduced funding (Middle Band, Middle Band 8, Middle Strings/Choir, Elementary Strings, Education Assistants and more) will impact the district's most vulnerable students, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves, make new connections and learn in new and exciting ways. Students entering their teen years face so many changes every day and they need all the help and support we can give them to grow into happy and healthy members of our communities.

These cuts will take incredible teachers and role models away from students who would only benefit from their empathetic, encouraging and enthusiastic approaches to education. Fine Arts Educators and Education Assistants enter those professions with a passion for people and their craft, knowing full well the road ahead is bumpy and challenging. What else proves that point if not this very proposed cut, that would result in job losses all over the district in so many schools? These are the areas that face situations like this over and over and over again.

I implore you to vote against this proposed budget cut. The impact would be felt province-wide. Fight for arts in schools. Please do not disadvantage students in this way.

I would like my letter to be included in the board meeting agenda package.

Respectfully,

Maria Sant`Anna Marquez

From: Victoria Hanley
To: Kelly Gorman
Subject: FW: Stop major cuts to music programs
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 8:32:52 AM

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correspondence

From: Penny Bradford <>
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2021 1:51 PM
To: Trustees <trustees@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Stop major cuts to music programs

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I have recently learned that in order to help address a $7M deficit, School District 61 in Victoria is proposing major cuts to their elementary and middle school music programs. These proposed cuts which include the equivalent of over 9 full time music teaching contracts at various schools across the district, as well as beginning strings, choirs, ukulele programs, and several other important musical initiatives will have a lasting effect not only on the children but also on arts and culture in Victoria.

As we all know, making music together is a way for children and young people to find connection, community, a sense of safety and belonging, and the joy of creating something that is larger than themselves. This is the worst time to be cutting these important programs.

Please safeguard children's accessibility to a valuable music education by voting NO.

Please include my letter in correspondence at the next board meeting.

Penny Bradford

April 12, 2021

Greater Victoria School District No. 61
556 Boleskine Rd, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

Dear School Trustees and Superintendents,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed budget. While I sympathize with the difficulty of creating a balanced budget, this cannot be done at the expense of the children you've been entrusted as elected officials to do your best for.

The number one thing that must be acknowledged and supported is that every child is unique.

Every day children are supported in our schools through gifted programs and by educational assistants. As it is, the resources are too thin to meet the needs. The proposed budget eliminates much of this support when it should be increased.

Music and the arts should never be considered extras to be eliminated first. They should never be reserved solely for those that can afford private lessons. The benefits of the arts have been proven to help in many ways across our lives. From our mental health to communication to problem solving.

The music program at Arbutus Global Middle School where my son attends is not only robust and varied but award winning. My son is in band and strings and has learned more than music... he's learned about collaboration, teamwork, and perseverance. The proposed budget cuts eliminate the entire program. This would be devastating to the school community.

Again, to reiterate my first point - every child is different. Among the future doctors and engineers are the future musicians and artists. When we introduce music and art to all children we open up futures.

Remember during this pandemic, while we relied on science for solutions, we overwhelmingly turned to the Arts for our mental health. We sang from balconies, we joined our communities for online music and comedy. We watched opera from the comfort of our living rooms. The future of our artists is in your hands as you decide whether they are worthy of being introduced to the Arts.

Yours truly,
Suzi Smart and Michael Evans

Wally and Nancy Dilay

Attention: Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools
Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent

Re: School District 61 Budget Cuts to Performing Arts.

Please include in board meeting agenda package

Please reconsider the dramatic cuts to music programs you are proposing. We are the grandparents of a student who loves going to school because of the Colquitz Middle School music program. We are also retired councillors who worked in Victoria and other school districts. We regularly saw first hand the benefits to students and the entire school atmosphere thanks to these kinds of programs. We saw that students who were involved in music programs were much less likely to get into trouble and drop out of school.

There is a large body of research on music and its effect on children's development. Music education increases academic success. It increases I.Q. It improves recall of verbal information and listening skills. Students who study music do better in math. Reading skills are improved. Music education better prepares students for work by strengthening perseverance, focus, and the ability to work with others. Music instruction also engages the brain networks used for decision making, focusing attention, and inhibiting impulses.

We have observed the excellent atmosphere in Colquitz School. There is an anti bullying atmosphere, a sense that all students can find a successful place and a desire to do well. We believe this atmosphere owes much to the strong fine arts component the staff at Colquitz has nurtured. The Colquitz fine arts attract an amazing number of students in the school and supports their academic achievement. Cutting outstanding programs like this discourages teachers from doing the hard work and creativity necessary to create such programs.

Children do better when music is part of their school curriculum. They learn better. They behave better. They are better prepared for higher education and work. Music parents and music students are likely to be more engaged in schools. Good music programs in schools make students better and they make the school system better. Please reconsider making such drastic cuts to such beneficial programs.

Sincerely,

Wally Dilay Nancy Dilay

Cc.
SD 61 Board of Trustees: Jordan Watters, Diane McNally, Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze, Elaine Leonard, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter, and Ann Whiteaker

Colquitz Administration: C. Topher, Principal and J. Scott, Vice Principal

Greater VICTORIA School District

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8
Phone (250) 475-4106 Fax (250) 475-4112

Board of Education

TO:	Board of Education
FROM:	Jordan Watters, Board Chair
RE:	Chair's Report
DATE:	April 26, 2021

I am happy to report that Trustee Ryan Painter has been appointed to the Audit Committee.

Update on Activities

- March 31 – BCSTA Board Chair's Meeting with Dr. Gustafson and Dr.McKee
- April 6 – Education Policy and Directions
- April 7 – Agenda Setting
- April 12 – Operations Policy and Planning
- April 13 – Agenda Setting
- April 13 – Special Board Budget Meeting
- April 15 – Budget Working Session #1
- April 15 – BCSTA AGM
- April 16 – BCSTA AGM
- April 17 – BCSTA AGM
- April 19 – Trustee Professional Development
- April 19 – Special In-Camera Board Meeting
- April 20 – Agenda Setting
- April 21 – BCSTA Board Chair's Meeting
- April 21 – 2021-2022 Public Budget Information Session
- April 22 – Budget Working Session #2

BC School Trustee's Association – Annual General Meeting

This virtual conference and business meeting was incredibly successful and well attended. Trustees engaged and debated 42 motions. I am happy to report that the three motions our Board brought to BCSTA were passed by the assembly. Those motions were:

- Be it resolved: That BCSTA urge the Ministry of Education to fully fund the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) in the same manner as the ministry funds the Early Years Development Instrument (EDI).

- Be it resolved: That BCSTA request the Ministry of Education to begin working with school districts to plan for the implementation of the government's goal of moving Childcare and Early Learning responsibility from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to the Ministry of Education by 2023; and, that the government provide school districts with the financial resources to prepare for this transition.

- Be it resolved: That BCSTA urge the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance to fully fund netzero school capital upgrade and replacement projects, effective immediately.

Committee Work

As part of my work on the BCSTA Student Citizenship Award Committee I reviewed assessed 77 student essay submissions addressing good citizenship. The quality of the essays was inspiring, and well worth the many hours I invested in reading them.

Professional Development

This month I read Educated by Tara Westover which is a powerful memoir about a young woman who was brought up by Mormon extremists who didn't believe in formal education or modern medicine.

I am now diving into My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies. This book explores the complex effects of racism on people of colour as well as on white people and how we all carry, and are harmed by, the trauma of racism.

MAY

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY MAY 21

BOARD'S GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES

Strategic Direction and Context

- Approve the 2021-2022 Board of Education and Standing Committee Dates
- Approve the 2021-2022 Academy Fees

External Compliance And Accountability

- Receive Carbon Neutral Action Report for Submission to Climate Action Secretariat by May 31st and Receive Energy Manager Report

System Planning And Performance Monitoring

- Operational Plan Reporting
- Review the Draft Annual Five-Year Capital Plan

Engagement with Stakeholders and Public Recognition Events

- Budget Process Debrief

Greater Victoria
School District

Office of Trustee Paynter

TO: Board

FROM: Trustee Rob Paynter

Re: Trustee Report

DATE: 21 April 2021

At the March 29, 2021 Board meeting I advised the Board that I was resigning from my role as Chair of the Audit Committee. At the end of the meeting, a public question was asked regarding my decision. Please accept this report as my response to that inquiry.

I have been a member of the Audit Committee since its creation. My motivation in taking on this task was my desire to see improvements in district practices that contribute to student achievement. To prepare for the role I completed the Audit Committee course offered by the Institute of Corporate Directors and read extensively from resources provided through the BC Ministry of Education's Financial Health Working Group, BC Auditor General and online resources on the topic. I am by now means an authority but felt comfortable in the role.

My primary objective in participating in the audit committee's work was to initiate internal audit processes such as those that exist in the neighbouring Sooke School District (SD62) and elsewhere. These processes have been useful in examining the allocation of resources with respect to operational functions and capital projects. The goal had been to learn from experience, identify weaknesses in policy and procedure and make improvements that result in more effective practices that ultimately delivered benefits to the classroom.

The Audit Committee has proven to be an effective mechanism to ask detailed questions regarding budget documents and financial updates. Having direct access to the Secretary Treasurer, Associate Secretary Treasurer, Director of Finance, Budgets and Financial Reporting and Manager of Accounting has been incredibly helpful in terms of interpreting budget information and reports. Work undertaken to review financial practices in schools has also been well done and identified opportunities to improve accounting and security practices. With respect to developing an internal audit capacity based on implementation of an organizational risk management framework has been less successful. I see this as my personal responsibility since I was the person most interested in making it happen. Despite my challenges I was committed to moving forward with this work until the Board chose to vote on an amended terms of reference for the Audit Committee at the January 25, 2021 Board meeting. I made my objections clear at both the December 2020 Operations Policy and Planning Committee and January 2021 Board meetings that the changes proposed to the terms of reference effectively removed the

capacity of the Audit Committee to undertake independent internal audits of Board practices. In effect the Audit Committee, in my personal opinion, has been reduced to a venue for receiving reports prepared by staff, reports that can just as easily be reviewed at the Operations Policy and Planning Committee.

The decision to limit the Audit Committee's investigative capacity comes at a time when there are outstanding questions regarding the expense and authorizations of the burnside construction project, cost overruns on the SJ Willis renovations and challenges with our annual budget and the ongoing structural deficit. I sincerely believe that having an effective and responsive internal audit capacity can be a benefit to the Board in understanding and learning from these situations. Combined with an appropriate Risk Management process I believe that we can more effectively steer our organization away from the worst of these issues and onto a path that enables us to focus more of our attention and efforts on improving student achievement outcomes. With this in mind, it was my decision that offering my resignation was the only means I had at hand to draw attention to my concerns.

Education Policy and Directions Committee Meeting

MINUTES

April 6, 2021
Broadcasted via YouTube
https://bit.ly/3czx8bA

Trustees Present: **Education Policy and Directions members**: Ryan Painter, Chair, Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Diane McNally, Jordan Watters (ex officio)
Operations Policy and Planning members: Elaine Leonard, Rob Paynter.

Administration: Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent, Andy Canty, Director, Information Technology for Learning, Kelly Gorman, Recorder

Stakeholders: Christine Payne, VCPAC, Cindy Graf, GVTA,

A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm

A.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

Chair Painter recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories we live, we learn, and we do our work.

A.2 Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Ferris

That the April 6, 2021 Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting agenda be approved.

Motion Carried Unanimously

A.3 Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Trustee Ferris

That the February 1, 2021 Education Policy and Directions Committee Meeting minutes be approved.

Motion Carried Unanimously

A.4 Approval of the Minutes

Trustee McNally requested that the March 1, 2021 Education Policy and Directions Committee minutes be amended.

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee McNally

Under C.4. Add: a)That the Superintendent abandon the present 4 choice plan for Craigflower and Shoreline, and restart the planning process under the active and direct guidance from the Lkwungen community in order to create a school that honours the culture, history, and wisdom of Lkwungen People in its design, vision, goals, & curriculum. b)That the Board of Education respectfully request direct updates from the Chiefs or delegates of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, reporting times and methods of reporting to be determined by Chiefs and Councils.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee McNally

Under A.2. Replace: Chair Painter ruled the ~~addition~~ motion out of order as it runs contrary to a motion that is currently in progress.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee McNally

Under A.2. Add: That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) adjourn the meeting due to perceived lack of respectful discussion.

For (2): Trustee Duncan, and Trustee McNally

Against (1): Trustee Painter

Abstain (2): Trustee Ferris, and Trustee Watters

Motion Carried (2 to 1)

Chair Painter called for the vote on the approval of the March 1, 2021 minutes as amended.

Moved by Trustee Ferris

That the March 1, 2021 Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting minutes be approved as amended.

Motion Carried Unanimously

A.5 Business Arising from Minutes

Trustee Duncan inquired as to when the presenters from March 1st, 2021 Education Policy and Planning Committee meeting are to present. Chair Painter stated that all presenters have been informed and moved to present at a later date.

B. NEW BUSINESS

B.1 Willows Elementary School - Code of Conduct - Brenna O'Connor, Principal, Willows Elementary School, Evelyn Morales, Teacher, Willows Elementary School, Kelsey Anderson, Teacher, Willows Elementary School

Brenna O'Connor, Principal, Willows Elementary School introduced the presentation and explained the process on how the Willows Code of Conduct evolved. Trustees provided thanks to Brenna O'Connor, Principal, Willows Elementary School, Evelyn Morales, Teacher, Willows Elementary and Kelsey Anderson, Teacher, Willows Elementary School.

B.2 District Team Update - Lindsay Johnson, District Vice-Principal

Lindsay Johnson, District Vice-Principal presented how Pathways and Partnerships aims to create equitable and culturally responsive Career Education opportunities across K-12 schools to develop the “Educated Citizen” in order to close the achievement gap leading to all students’ personal success. Trustees provided thanks for the presentation and questions of clarification were asked.

B.3 District Team - Learning Support - Part Two - Pam Halverson, District Principal and Sean McCartney, District Principal

Sean McCartney, District Principal and Pam Halverson, District Principal presented the update and explained how the District Team Learning department work in four key areas: Home-school partnerships, Effective student supports, Professional learning & Infrastructure. Trustees thanked staff for the presentation and questions of clarification were asked.

Moved by Trustee McNally

That the Board instruct the Superintendent to accept the Learning Team offer of a working session on psycho-educational assessments, and that members of the VCPAC Executive and any interested parent be invited to attend the Zoom meeting and participate.

For (2): Trustee Duncan, and Trustee McNally

Against (3): Trustee Painter, Trustee Ferris, and Trustee Watters

Motion Defeated (2 to 3)

C. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:34pm

Moved by Trustee Ferris
Seconded by Trustee Watters

That the meeting adjourn.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer

Operations Policy and Planning Committee Meeting

REGULAR MINUTES

April 12, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
Broadcasted via YouTube
https://bit.ly/3czx8bA

Trustees Present:	**Operations Policy and Planning Committee members**: Elaine Leonard (Chair), Rob Paynter, Angie Hentze , Ann Whiteaker, Jordan Watters (ex officio) **Education Policy and Directions Committee members**: Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris
Administration:	Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent, Katrina Stride, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Andy Canty, Director, Information Technology for Learning, Kelly Gorman, Recorder
Stakeholders:	Kristil Hammer, President, VCPAC, Mark Morrison, Second VP & Health & Safety Officer, GVTA, Kerrie Proudlove, CUPE 947

A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm.

A.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

Chair Leonard recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories we live, we learn, and we do our work.

A.2 Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker

That the April 12, 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting agenda be approved.

Motion Carried Unanimously

A.3 Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Trustee Watters

That the March 8, 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting minutes be approved, as amended.

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee Whiteaker

Under C.1. Remove: "Trustee McNally stated her appreciation for the change to the motion." and "Trustee Hentze prefers the Superintendents motion, the wording needs to come from the Nations and not from staff."

Motion Carried Unanimously

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee Whiteaker

Under H.6., I.1. and I.2. change the heading to the topic, not the Trustee name.

Motion Carried Unanimously

A.4 Business Arising from Minutes

Trustee Whiteaker asked staff if Jane Massy will be presenting at a future Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting. Staff will be reaching out to Jane Massy to re-schedule.

B. PRESENTATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

B.1 Sustainability and Composting - Sadie Fox

Sadie Fox presented on Sustainability and Composting. Trustees provided thanks to Sadie Fox for the informative presentation.

C. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Nil

D. PERSONNEL ITEMS

Nil

E. FINANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

E.1 Policy Sub-Committee Report

a. Draft Child Care Policy 1330

Secretary-Treasurer Morris presented the proposed draft policy. Questions of clarification were asked. Trustees asked questions and suggested updates.

Moved by Trustee Watters

That the Board of Education of Greater Victoria (School District 61) disseminate draft Policy 1330, Child Care out for feedback.

Motion Carried Unanimously

b. New Policy 4116.13, Whistleblower Protection

Secretary -Treasurer Morris presented Policy 4116.13 Whistleblower Protection. Questions of clarification were asked.

Moved by Trustee Watters

That the Board of Education approve Policy 4116.13 Whistleblower Protection, as presented.

Discussion ensued amongst the Trustees with a recommendation being made to refer the motion so staff can provide revisions.

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee Watters

That the motion "*That the Board of Education approve Policy 4116.13 Whistleblower Protection, as presented*" be referred to the September 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting.

Motion Carried Unanimously

c. Defer Draft Bylaw 9140, Ad Hoc Committee of the Board and Draft Policy 8251, Trustees' Code of Conduct

At the February 8, 2021 committee meeting, Bylaw 9140 and Draft Policy 8251 were deferred to the March 8, 2021 committee meeting. The items were not dispatched at the March meeting and require a further deferral.

Moved by Trustee Hentze

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) defer Draft Bylaw 9140, Ad Hoc Committee of the Board and Draft Policy 8251, Trustees' Code of Conduct to the May 10, 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting.

For (4): Trustee Leonard, Trustee Paynter, Trustee Hentze, and Jordan Watters

Against (1): Trustee Whiteaker

Motion Carried

E.2 Monthly Financial Report - February 2021

Secretary-Treasurer Morris provided Trustees the Monthly Financial Report for February 2021. The yearly revenue and expenses were compared against those for the year prior. Questions of clarification were asked.

F. FACILITIES PLANNING

F.1 Operations Update: April 2021

Secretary-Treasurer Morris answered questions about the report in Director of Facilities Morris' absence.

F.2 2020/2021 Lead in Water Report

Secretary-Treasurer Morris recorded questions to give to Director of Facilities Morris to be included on the Operations Update: May 2021.

G. NEW BUSINESS

G.1 Budget Allocation Process - Trustee Paynter

Trustee Paynter provided rationale for the motion. Trustees and Stakeholders debated the motion.

Moved by Trustee Paynter

That the Board of Education of Greater Victoria (School District 61) direct the Superintendent to develop an annual budget process that targets the supports needed for vulnerable students (specifically students requiring special education assessments, those with special education designations and students living in poverty) to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations as the primary objective, followed by allocation of remaining resources on a per student basis. FURTHER, that the District:

- Make standard the use of early screening tools to identify learning difficulties and behavioural or developmental challenges;
- Provide additional staff time to support early intervention programming at the K-5 level;
- Actively participate in delivering wrap-around programming and support for students including inclusive childcare, after school programming, and family support programs where appropriate, through engaged cooperation with provincial agencies, municipalities and community associations.

For (1): Trustee Paynter

Against (4): Trustee Leonard, Trustee Paynter, Trustee Hentze, and Jordan Watters

Motion Defeated

Trustee Watters advised H.2 was intended to be a notice of motion. Moved to I.1.

G.2 Working Committee and Consultation on Compost and Waste - Trustee Whiteaker

Trustee Whiteaker provided rationale for the motion.

Moved by Trustee Whiteaker

That the Board of Education of SD 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to oversee the creation of a Working Committee and consultation process, as outlined in Bylaw 9210, to prepare a draft *Compost and Waste* policy proposal to ensure consistent practices and supports across the district which are in alignment with our environmental values and goals.

Discussion ensued amongst the Trustees with a recommendation being made to refer the motion.

Amendment:
Moved by Trustee Whiteaker

That the motion "*That the Board of Education of SD 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to oversee the creation of a Working Committee and consultation process, as outlined in Bylaw 9210, to prepare a draft Compost and Waste policy proposal to ensure consistent practices and supports across the district which are in alignment with our environmental values and goals*" be referred to the May 10, 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting.

G.3 N95 Masks - Trustee Paynter

Trustee Paynter provided rationale for the motion.

That the Board of Education of Greater Victoria (School District 61) in recognition of increasing numbers of COVID-19 in the local community and district schools, direct the Superintendent to purchase sufficient supplies of N95 (or equivalent standard) masks and eye protection to supply all district staff in regular, close contact with students or other staff.

For (1): Trustee Paynter

Against (4): Trustee Leonard, Trustee Paynter, Trustee Hentze, and Jordan Watters

Motion Defeated

G.4 George Jay Naming Committee Terms of Reference - Trustee Hentze

Trustee Hentze provided the George Jay Naming Committee Terms of Reference.

Moved by Trustee Hentze

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve the George Jay Naming Committee Terms of Reference as presented.

Motion Carried Unanimously

H. NOTICE OF MOTION

H.1 Adendum to Bylaw 9360 - Correspondence Treatment - Trustee Watters

Trustee Watters provided a Notice of Motion for the May 10, 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee.

That the Greater Victoria School District direct the Policy Development Sub-Committee to develop an addition or addendum to Bylaw 9360 addressing the how Board correspondence is managed in order to provide clear direction and transparency around Board processes.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm

Moved by Trustee Watters

That the meeting adjourn.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer

We nurture each student's learning and well-being in a safe, responsive, and inclusive learning community.

POLICY 1330-1
Child Care Policy

Black=BCSTA Policy Template

Red = additions from Burnaby, Coquitlam and West Vancouver drafts

Green = added by the working group

Drafted: February 2021
Adopted:
Revised:
Frequency of Review:

1.0 RATIONALE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance with respect to how the Board will promote the use of Board property for the provision of child care programs between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. on business days by either the Board or third party licensees.

1.2 The use of Board property by licensed child care providers must not disrupt or otherwise interfere with the provision of educational activities including early learning programs and extracurricular school activities.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 In this Policy, the terms "Board property," "business day," "child care program," "educational activities" and "licensee" have the meanings given to those terms in the *School Act*.

2.2 "Direct and indirect costs" include:

i. Utilities;
ii. Maintenance and repair;
iii. A reasonable allowance for the cost of providing custodial services;
iv. A reasonable allowance for time school district administrators and other staff spend on matters relating to the use of Board property by licensed child care providers.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 The Board will, on an ongoing basis, assess community need for child care programs on Board property, through a process of engagement with employee groups, parents and guardians, Indigenous community representatives, Indigenous rights holders, Indigenous service providers, municipal partners and existing child care operators. The process for engagement will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and conducted in a manner acceptable to the Board.

3.2 If child care programs are to be provided on Board property, the Board will consider, on an ongoing basis, whether those programs are best provided by licensees other than the Board, the Board, or a combination of both.

3.3 Child care programs, if operated by the Board, will be operated for a fee no greater than the direct costs the Board incurs in providing the child care program.

3.4 Fees for the use of Board property by licensees other than the Board will not exceed the direct and indirect costs the Board incurs in making Board property available for the child care program in accordance with the School Act and set by the Secretary-Treasurer from time to time.

3.5 If child care programs are operated by a licensee other than the Board, the Board will require the licensee to agree to comply with this Policy.

3.6 In selecting licensees other than the Board to operate a child care program, the Board will give special consideration to the candidates' proposals to:

(a) provide inclusive child care;
(b) foster Indigenous reconciliation in child care;
(c) maintain a program philosophy and management concept congruent with the values of this Policy and the Board's Strategic Plan
(d) demonstrated successful experience as a licensed childcare operator;
(e) opt into the Provincial Fee Reduction Initiative; and
(f) demonstrate financial stability
(g) utilize the BC Early Learning Framework to guide and support learning experiences in childcare settings.

3.7 If the Board decides to operate a child care program, the Board will ensure that it is operated in a manner that:

i. fosters Indigenous reconciliation in child care. In particular, the child care program will be operated consistently with the following principles of the British Columbia *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*: (i) Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including in the area of education; and (ii) "Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education"; and

ii. is inclusive and consistent with the principles of non-discrimination set out in the British Columbia *Human Rights Code*.

3.8 Any contract with a licensee other than the Board, to provide a child care program on Board property must be in writing and subject to review annually ~~no less than every [*insert number*] years~~. The contract must contain:

i. a description of the direct and indirect costs for which the licensee is responsible, including a provision for late payment or default;

ii. an agreement by the licensee to comply with this policy and all other applicable policies of the Board;

iii. a provision describing how the agreement can be terminated by the Board or the licensee;

iv. an allocation of responsibility to ensure adequate insurance is in place to protect the interests of the Board;

v. a statement that the agreement can only be amended in writing, signed by the Board and the licensee;

vi. a requirement for the licensee to maintain appropriate standards of performance;

vii. a requirement that the licensee must at all times maintain the required license to operate a child care facility; and

viii. Provision for adherence to the Board's Child Care Handbook

3.9 Prior to entering into or renewing a contract with a licensee other than the Board to provide a child care program on Board property, the Board will consider:

i. Whether it is preferable for the Board to become a licensee and operate a child care program directly;

ii. the availability of school district staff to provide before and after school care; and

iii. whether, with respect to a licensee seeking renewal or extension of a contract, the licensee has performed its obligations under this Policy and its contract with the Board, with specific regard to performance in respect of providing an inclusive child care program and one that promotes indigenous reconciliation in child care.

3.10 When the Board decides to change the use of Board property that is being used for provision of childcare programming, , the Board will provide written notification to the Minister of Education.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 **The Board of Education** is responsible to ensure compliance with the *School Act*

4.2 The **Superintendent** is responsible to ensure that District policy is upheld and regulations are enforced.

4.3 School-based Administration are responsible to ensure adherence to the Board's Child Care Handbook

5.0 REFERENCES

5.1 Ministerial Order M326, August 31, 2020

5.2 School Act Section 85.1, 85.2, 85.3, 85.4, March 5, 2020

Terms of Reference

George Jay Naming Committee

Purpose:

Review the George Jay Renaming Consultation Report (provided at the December 9, 2019 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting) and make a recommendation to the Board of Education to rename or retain the current name.

Deliverables:

Phase One

- Receive updates from the Equity Scan
- Establish guiding principles and values for the Committee
- To assess the history of how George Jay was named.
- To consider concerns regarding the named school, George Jay.
- To make a recommendation to the Board of Education on renaming the school.

Phase Two – if the committee recommends to the Board of Education, to rename the school

- To make a recommendation to the Board of Education on the name for the school.

1. The committee must conform with the Province's Naming Privileges Policy, as amended from time to time.

Timeline:

The Committee will report to the Operations Policy and Planning Committee in May 2021 with a final report delivered to the Board in the fall of 2021.

Voting:

Recommendations to be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, multiple options will be reported to Operations Policy and Planning Committee.

Procedural notes:

Meeting dates, locations, agendas and minutes to be available to the members. (subject to change)

REGULATION 1421

NAMING SCHOOL SITES

2. When naming a school site, the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) will appoint a committee to oversee consultation for the development of a suitable name. This will be done pursuant to Policy 1163 and Regulation 1163 – Consultation. The committee should include, at the minimum, the following:
   A) A Trustee
   B) The Superintendent or their designate
   C) The School Principal
   D) A member of the School's teaching staff
   E) A member of the School's Parent Advisory Council
   F) Up to 2 members of the Indigenous community
   G) Up to 3 members of the local community
3. The committee may request that the Board approve a specific name for a school site. The request must be accompanied by a report detailing the results of a consultative process carried out pursuant to Policy 1163 and Regulation 1163 – Consultation.

BYLAW 9360

GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOARD

1. The Board of Education of School District 61 shall meet in general session on the fourth Monday of each month except where the fourth Monday is a statutory holiday, in which case the meeting will take place on the next working day, except for the months of July and August, when no meeting will be held and for the month of December, when the meeting shall be on the second Monday of the month.

2. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board in general session, the Board, as elected, shall meet for the first time within 30 days after the official results of the election of trustees shall have been declared, for the purpose of receiving the results, the swearing in of the new trustees, and the selection of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. This inaugural meeting of the Board shall be called and chaired by the Secretary-Treasurer of the School District. Each year thereafter during the term of office, the election of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Board representatives to various agencies where the Trustees have regular representation and the appointment of Trustees to internal and external committees shall take place at the November Board meeting.

3. The Chair, the Secretary-Treasurer or any three trustees, may call a special general meeting of the Board, in addition to the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board, upon not less than forty-eight hours' notice in writing to all trustees.

4. A special general meeting of the Board may be called upon less than the normal forty-eight hours' notice, in writing or by telephone, with such meeting being deemed to have been properly convened if a majority of trustees agree to waive the normal forty-eight hours' of written notice.

5. The following procedural matters will be implemented:

   - The meetings will be conducted in two major sections:

     The first will encompass the agenda, minutes and acceptance of presentations from the public and employee groups;

     The second will be for the consideration of Board Committee Reports and Special Reports to the Board.

   - The meetings should be conducted in a timely manner and time guidelines and limits adhered to with respect to:

     * general meetings of the Board of Education commence at 7:30 p.m. and continue until no later than 11:00 p.m., save as may be extended by majority consent

     * Starting the meeting on time

     * The Community Presentations period is limited to a maximum of six speakers, each speaking a maximum of five minutes; there can only be three speakers per issue (numbers and time may be extended at the discretion of the Chair)

     * No public debate with presenters; information only will be received

     * The Question Period is limited to 15 minutes

6. Wherever possible, the public will be encouraged to attend a Committee meeting rather than a Board meeting in order to facilitate dialogue with the public before decisions are made. Discussion and debate of issues takes place at two regularly scheduled Standing Committee meetings each month. During the Standing Committee meetings, members of the public make presentations and discussions often ensue with committee members, stakeholder groups, and staff.

   In addition to the opportunities to present at Standing Committees, employee partner groups including the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association (GVTA), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 947 and Local 382), the

Victoria Parent Advisory Councils (VCPAC), Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, Youth Representatives Committee, and the Victoria Principals and Vice-Principals Association (VPVPA), are able to provide comment on specific motions prior to them being voted on by the Board. The Board Chair will ask stakeholder representatives whether they would like to provide comment on motions prior to the Board of Education considering the motion. Each stakeholder representative will have up to two minutes to provide comment through the Chair.

7. In the event that the Board shall fail to conclude the business of the agenda by the time of adjournment the Chair may designate not more than one additional meeting, to be held within one week on the day and date designated by the Chair.

8. The agenda shall be prepared and circulated by the Chair of the Board.

9. There shall be an agenda circulated to all trustees not less than three days prior to each regularly scheduled meeting of the Board in general session, and not less than forty-eight hours prior to a special meeting of the Board in general session.

10. The agenda shall be approved by ordinary motion as the first item of business at each meeting.

11. The Agenda shall contain the following:

    Guidelines for the meeting format including outlining opportunities for public and stakeholder comments

    A. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories; Approval of the Agenda; Approval of Previous Minutes and Business Arising from the Minutes

       Student Achievement Presentations; District Presentations; Community Presentations

    B. Correspondence

    C. Chair's Report; Trustee Reports (including Reports from Trustee Representatives with Other Public Bodies)

D. Board Committee Reports:

(1) Education Policy and Directions Motions
(2) Operations Policy and Planning Motions

E. District Leadership Team Reports

F. Question Period

G. Public Disclosure of In-Camera Items

H. New Business/Notice of Motions

I. Adjournment

The order of the Agenda shall be as above, unless varied at the meeting by majority vote.

12. A copy of the Agenda shall be made available to the media, partner groups and the public (website) through the Secretary-Treasurer's office on the day after copies are delivered to trustees, and such Agenda shall have attached the Committee Reports.

13. The Board Chair may reschedule any regularly-scheduled general meeting of the Board to a different time and date in order to meet the business requirements of the Board. The Board may, by ordinary resolution, cancel a regular general meeting of the Board.

14. In accordance with Section 67 of the *School Act*, the Board may allow Trustees to participate in or attend a meeting of the Board by telephone or other means of communication if all Trustees and other persons participating in or attending the meeting are able to communicate with each other. Such attendance shall only be permitted where Trustee participation is prevented by extraordinary circumstances. Trustees wishing to attend electronically must provide a minimum of 48 hours' notice of such attendance.

15. With the exception of poll votes pursuant to Bylaw 9011, the Board shall not conduct meetings electronically. For the purposes of this bylaw, electronic communications that would constitute a meeting include communications shared among all trustees that materially advance a matter before the Board. This Bylaw does not prohibit the electronic provision of information pertaining to a matter before the Board.

Greater Victoria School District

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Various Revisions
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Revised: January 16, 2006
Revised January 19, 2009 (corrected)
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Revised: December 14, 2015
Revised: June 20, 2016
Revised: April 24, 2017
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BYLAW 9360

GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOARD

1. The Board of Education of School District 61 will regularly meet on the fourth Monday of each month except where the fourth Monday is a statutory holiday, in which case the meeting will take place on the next working day, except for the months of July and August, when no meeting will be held and for the month of December, when the meeting will be on the second Monday of the month.

2. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board the newly elected Board will meet for the first time within 30 days after the official results of the election of trustees will have been declared, for the purpose of receiving the results, the swearing in of Trustees, and the selection of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. This inaugural meeting of the Board will be called and chaired by the Secretary-Treasurer of the School District until the Chair is elected, at which time the elected Chair will preside.

3. Each year thereafter during the term of office, the election of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Board representatives will take place at the November Board meeting. At the meeting following, the Chair will appoint, after first canvassing Trustees for interest, Trustees to external and internal committees, as well as family of schools, municipal and First Nation liaison roles.

4. The Chair, the Secretary-Treasurer or any three trustees, may call a special ~~or extra-ordinary~~ meeting of the Board, in addition to the regularly scheduled general meetings of the Board.

5. A special meeting will be called upon less than the normal forty-eight hours' notice, in writing or by telephone, with such meeting being deemed to have been properly convened if a majority of trustees agree to waive the normal forty-eight hours' of written notice.

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* Starting the meeting on time

* The Community Presentations period is limited to a maximum of six speakers, each speaking a maximum of five minutes; there can only be three speakers per issue (numbers and time may be extended at the discretion of the Chair)

* Individuals or delegations wishing to make a presentation will be advised of their placement on an upcoming agenda on the Wednesday before the Regular meeting. Presentations on behalf of groups will be presentation by the spokesperson(s) of that group, who will be identified on the agenda.

* There will be no public debate with presenters; information only will be received

* The Question Period is limited to 15 minutes

7. The public will be encouraged to attend the Education Policy and Directions, or the Operations Policy and Planning Standing Committee meetings, ~~in order to~~ rather than a Board meeting, to facilitate dialogue with the public before decisions are made.

In addition to the opportunities to participate at Standing Committees, the Board Chair will ask partner groups including the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association

(GVTA), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE Locals 947 and 382), the Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (VCPAC), Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, Student Representatives, and the Victoria Principals and Vice-Principals Association (VPVPA), whether they would like to provide comment on motions prior to them being debated by the Board. Each stakeholder representative will have up to two minutes to provide comment through the Chair.

8. In the event that the Board may fail to conclude the business of the agenda by the time of adjournment the Chair may ask the board to prioritize the remaining agenda items. Agenda items not concluded at the meeting, will be placed on the next month's agenda, and given priority to occur before new business.

9. All agendas will be prepared by the Chair of the Board, and circulated by the Chair or designate. Proposed agenda items will be provided to the Secretary-Treasurer no later than the Tuesday before the meeting.

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    A. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories; Approval of the Agenda; Approval of Previous Minutes and Business Arising from the Minutes and Presentations of which first priority will be given to schools, and then to the public and community.

    B. Opportunity for Comments from the Public (15 minutes)

    C. Correspondence

    D. Chair's Report; Trustee Reports

    E. Board Committee Reports:

        (1) Education Policy and Directions Motions

(2) Operations Policy and Planning Motions

F. Staff Reports

G. Question Period

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I. New Business/Notice of Motions

J. Adjournment

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12. An electronic copy of the General Meeting Agenda will be made available to the media, partner groups and the public (website) through the Secretary-Treasurer's three days before the meeting.

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Revised: February 2021

BYLAW 9360

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Greater VICTORIA School District

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8
Phone (250) 475-4106 Fax (250) 475-4112

Office of the Superintendent

Shelley Green – Superintendent of Schools

TO:	Board of Education
FROM:	Shelley Green
RE:	Superintendent's Report
DATE:	April 26, 2021

There are a number of items that the Superintendent wishes to bring to the attention of the Board of Education.

Events and Meetings

The Superintendent has attended a number of events and met with a number of individuals since the last Board meeting. These have included:

- District Committees
  - Educational Staffing Committee
- Meetings and Events
  - Professional Conversations
- Meetings
  - Arbutus
  - Generative Dialogue/Coaching
  - Joint Committee (GVTA)
  - Ministry of Education Updates
  - Partner Groups – COVID Update
  - Professional Relations Committee (GVTA)
  - Principal Leader Cohort
  - Principals and Vice-Principals
  - Representative Advisory Council of Students
  - Tri-District Superintendents
  - Trustee Professional Working Session
  - VPVPA
  - Victoria High Staff Meeting
  - Victoria West Community Association

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) accept the Superintendent's Report, as presented.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8
Phone (250) 475-4162 Fax (250) 475-4112

Office of the Superintendent

Shelley Green –Superintendent

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: April 26, 2021

RE: Budget Thoughtexchange Summary Report

Background:

As part of the Board approved 2021-2022 Budget Consultation Process, the District hosted an online Thoughtexchange to gather input from students, families, staff and educational partners on the upcoming budget. Each year, the School District engages with its learning community on the topic of student success and resource allocation. This year, the Board approved the following question to invite feedback on the annual budget:

"The student experience is at the heart of all we do in SD61. What are the most important changes you would make to your school (child's/students'/own) environment to improve the student experience?"

The online exchange was open for two weeks and an invitation to participate was advertised broadly:

- Letters to school communities and partners
- District web and social media content
- Media coverage (paper, online and TV)

More than 6,000 members of the community participated in the exchange, and over 7,000 thoughts were shared.

Please see attached a Thoughtexchange Summary Report. An in-depth online interactive version is also available on the District's website: https://my.thoughtexchange.com/report/f1e98cb05bfb8e678bad0d629ac9d09a

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

ThoughtExchange

Exchange Summary

School District No. 61 Greater Victoria
March 12, 2021

The student experience is at the heart of all we do in SD61. What are the most important changes you would make to your school (child's/students'/own) environment to improve the student experience?

PARTICIPATION
Breakdown of Participation

6,061 Participants

7,018 Thoughts

213,547 Ratings

3,563
Participants shared thoughts

59%

3,616
Participants rated thoughts

60%

4,007
Participants explored thoughts

66%

PARTICIPATION
Breakdown of Participation

Understanding you may hold more than one role, which best describes your role?

%		Answer
10%	(567)	Student
2%	(93)	Staff (CUPE)
8%	(476)	Staff (Teacher)
1%	(61)	Staff (Other)
55%	(3160)	Parent/Guardian
0%	(1)	Esquimalt Nations
0%	(3)	Songhees Nations
17%	(946)	Community
0%	(6)	Trustee
7%	(398)	Other

WORDCLOUD

Top Rated

Words are sized based on the star rating of the thoughts they appear in.

THOUGHTS
Key Thoughts

No cuts to the Arts, Music or Theatre programs A holistic education should include the arts - they inspire the students and sometimes are the only reason they are motivated to go to school at all.

4.8 ★★★★★ (50)
Ranked #2 of 6633

Delaying band to grade 8 will result in far fewer students starting band. Students in grade 6 are more open to new experiences such as starting band. If we want band to be accessible to the most students, starting them in grade 6 will ensure a more inclusive music education program.

4.8 ★★★★★ (44)
Ranked #3 of 6633

Music is essential to the education of all students. Without music in public schools, only wealthy students will be able to access it through private lessons. This is unjust.

4.8 ★★★★★ (39)
Ranked #5 of 6633

Music programs have been instrumental in helping students develop a sense of belonging and self-worth. The benefits of belonging to a group and working towards a common goal in music programs are immeasurable.

4.8 ★★★★★ (37)
Ranked #11 of 6633

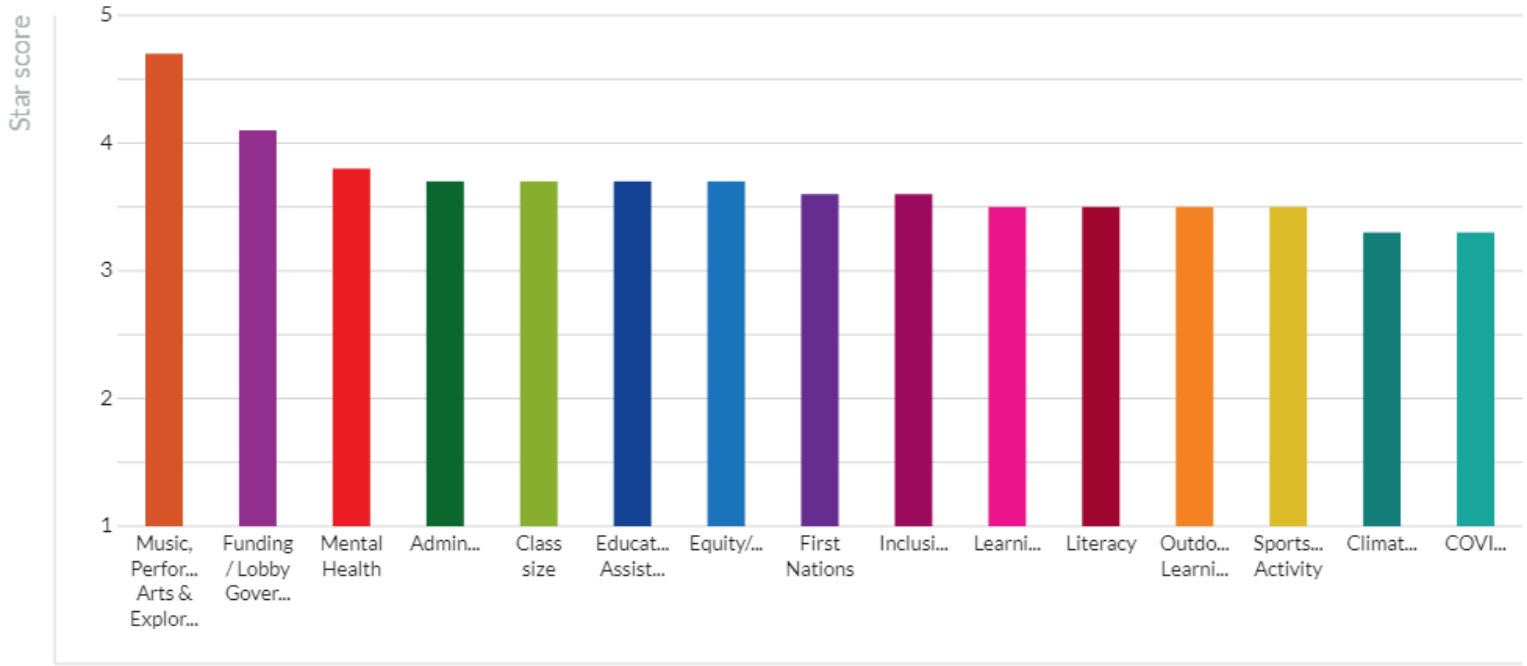
Music supports the neurodiverse students It's a way to encourage and provide inclusion

4.8 ★★★★★ (37)
Ranked #12 of 6633

Offering equal opportunities to the arts Some children's only opportunities to learn about art and music is through school

4.8 ★★★★★ (36)
Ranked #13 of 6633

BUDGET 2021-2022
Top 15 Themes



Displays information based on the average star ratings of the total thoughts shared within each theme.

Top 15 Themes in Online Exchange

- Music, Performing Arts and Exploratories
- Funding/Lobby Government
- Mental Health
- Administration
- Class Sizes
- Educational Assistants
- Equity/Equality
- First Nations
- Inclusion
- Learning
- Literacy
- Outdoor Learning
- Sports – Physical Activity
- Climate
- COVID-19

There were more than 4900+ thoughts submitted about music, performing arts and exploratories.

THOUGHTS – #1 Theme
Music, Performing Arts & Exploratories

Don't cut music! Music is so important!!!! My kid wouldn't show up if it wasn't for music. Band and theater has saved her!! 4.8 ★★★★★ (50)

No cuts to the Arts, Music or Theatre programs A holistic education should include the arts - they inspire the students and sometimes are the only reason they are motivated to go to school at all. 4.8 ★★★★★ (50)

Delaying band to grade 8 will result in far fewer students starting band. Students in grade 6 are more open to new experiences such as starting band. If we want band to be accessible to the most students, starting them in grade 6 will ensure a more inclusive music education program. 4.8 ★★★★★ (44)

I strongly encourage keeping music education in schools alive and well. For me, music programs brought so much joy and were an escape from stressors. Students need things they enjoy, and music should not be excluded. 4.8 ★★★★★ (39)

Music is essential to the education of all students. Without music in public schools, only wealthy students will be able to access it through private lessons. This is unjust. 4.8 ★★★★★ (39)

Please keep the music program if at all possible. Thank you for all that you are doing and considering. Music is part of being a healthy human. This is essential for brain development and learning. 4.8 ★★★★★ (39)

THOUGHTS - #2 Theme
Funding / Lobby Government

Music Programs must not be cut. The district(s) must lobby the Provincial Government for more funding. 4.7 ★★★★★ (38)

Now is not the time to be cutting funding to schools. We are already so under resourced that we are not providing the student experience that SD61 children deserve. 4.6 ★★★★½ (38)

We have lost so much over the past 12 months. Please, do not take this enriching opportunity away from our learners of tomorrow. 4.5 ★★★★½ (27)

My hope is that this proposed budget cut will be reconsidered. We need to think about the kind of major impact this will have not only in schools but In the community. Thank you for your time. 4.4 ★★★★½ (29)

Schools should be funded more not less. Cutting funding to schools only hurts us all in the long run as a society. Keeping children engaged and active in their community, school and with their peers helps to guide them on a good life path. Funding our future 4.3 ★★★★☆ (39)

Advocate to governments for proper funding for public education. Our schools should look like and have the same resources as private schools. 4.3 ★★★★☆ (34)

THOUGHTS - #3 Theme
Mental Health

Cutting funding to our award winning music programs will have a severe impact to our children's emotional health and well- being. This outdated approach to funding cultural programs in our schools is unacceptable and you are devaluing an important part of our children's growth.

4.8 ★★★★★ (35)

Music Programs are Essential for Mental Health and Wellbeing Music is scientifically proven to aid in mental health, wellness and growth.

4.7 ★★★★★ (40)

The pandemic has affected all of us deeply and our children need creative outlets like music to keep them engaged in learning and for mental health. As mentioned, this is NOT the time to be reducing music in schools. Our children need this outlet and the joy that music brings to their lives.

4.7 ★★★★★ (40)

Kids and teens need music programs for their emotional health and wellbeing

4.7 ★★★★★ (38)

Music and the arts provide stress relief and enriching, theraputic activities during the school day. Having rich music and arts programs as part of the school day gives children the message that their mental health and emotional well being matter.

4.7 ★★★★★ (38)

THOUGHTS

What We Heard: Other Themes

Administration

- Cut from administration rather than schools
- “Make cuts at the top”

Class size

- Smaller class sizes and more assistance in the classrooms
- Give teachers more time to work with individual students
- Small class sizes are important to student learning
- Maintain class sizes and cleaning practices; beneficial during COVID-19

Climate/Sustainability

- Continue to teach students about environmental stewardship
- School emission from heating, cooling and electricity need modernization for a green future
- Follow through with declared climate emergency
- More bike racks

THOUGHTS
What We Heard: Other Themes

COVID-19

- Maintain or increase custodial time
- Foster parental involvement post COVID-19
- More dedicated outdoor learning spaces

Educational Assistants

- Increase EA support
- EA's play a valuable role in supporting healthy schools
- "Don't take away EAs, gifted programs, or YFCs"

Equity/Equality

- School experience should be equal access
- Do not take supports away from vulnerable learners
- Extra curriculars should be offered through schools; many cannot afford all the opportunities for their children
- Keep Human Rights at the forefront of budgeting

What We Heard: Other Themes

First Nations

- Continue partnerships with local First Nation communities
- Prioritize Indigenous Ways of Learning/Knowing
- More courses on Indigenous History
- Invite Elders into schools to work with youth

Inclusion/Diversity

- More supports required for students with designations and neuro-diverse learners
- More supports required for mental health
- Encourage LGBTQIA2S+ diversity and anti-racist training in schools
- Prioritize anti-racist policies
- Include voices from all people in the community, “focus on impacts for all students, not just the wealthy.”

What We Heard: Other Themes

Learning

- Cutting teaching jobs will impact student learning
- Offer flexible or various learning experiences to engage students at different stages
- Enhance exploratories and provide more hands-on learning experiences
- Include more real life lessons, e.g., budgeting, taxes, mortgages
- More anti-racism education required
- Keep curriculum competitive with global standards

Literacy

- “No cuts to reading recovery”
- More investment in libraries and literacy
- Update technology in libraries to build proper learning commons
- Continue focus on literacy in science and math

What We Heard: Other Themes

Outdoor Learning

- Provide more time for students to learn outdoors
- Increase nature play and cultural experiences
- Desire for more outdoor learning spaces/classrooms

Sports/Physical Activity

- Many references of how music is a “team sport”
- Some felt too many resources were focused on sports academies
- Physical education is important year round; course should be offered for a full year
- Invest in outdoor sport equipment, e.g., basketball courts, climbing boulders
- Phys. Ed introduces healthy habits for students

For the full summary report, please visit:
https://my.thoughtexchange.com/report/f1e98cb05bfb8e678bad0d629ac9d09a

**Full summary report includes all contributions/comments.*

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8
Phone (250) 475-4162 Fax (250) 475-4112

Office of the Superintendent

Shelley Green - Superintendent

TO: The Board of Education

FROM: Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools

RE: Superintendent's Report

DATE: April 26, 2021

During this portion of the Board Meeting, Trustees will have the opportunity to raise questions. Where possible, an immediate response will be provided. In the event that research is necessary before a response is provided, the matter will be postponed until a researched response can be provided.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

Greater VICTORIA School District

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
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Phone (250) 475-4106 Fax (250) 475-4112

Office of the Secretary-Treasurer

Kim Morris - Secretary Treasurer

TO: **Board of Education**

FROM: **Kim Morris**

RE: **Monthly Report**

DATE: **April 26, 2021**

The purpose of this memo is to update the Board on some of the activities of the Secretary-Treasurer's office since March's report.

- Facilities and Minor Capital Staff Weekly Meetings with Superintendent
- Administrators Meeting
- Deputy Minister Meetings
- Human Resources Bi-Weekly Meetings
- Victoria High School Seismic Project Bi-Weekly Meetings
- CSF Co-Location at Braefoot Project Bi-Weekly Meetings
- Board and Committee meetings
- Weekly Budget Meetings with Finance Team
- District Allocation Working Group Meetings
- BCASBO Leadership Cohort
- Student Representative Meeting
- Various Department and Partner budget meetings
- Zero Emission School Bus Information Meeting
- BCSTA AGM
- Media re Budget
- VISTA Branch Meeting
- Funding Equity Committee Meeting
- Board Working Sessions 1 and 2 re Budget
- Partner meeting Caledonia
- Future Partnership Project Meeting District of Saanich
- PRC Committee Meeting

SECTION 72 REPORT

Present:
Trustees Jordan Watters, Chair, Elaine Leonard, Vice-Chair, Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter (arrived at 6:05 p.m.), and Ann Whiteaker

Sanctioned:
Trustee Diane McNally

Guest:
Andrew Kadler, Koffman, Kalef, LLP

Administration:
Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent, Colin Robert, Associate Superintendent, Katrina Stride, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities Services, Jim Soles, Associate Director, Facilities Services, Lisa McPhail, Communications and Community Engagement Manager and Vicki Hanley, Recorder

The Board of Education discussed the following matters:

- Property
- Governance

SECTION 72 REPORT

Present:
Trustees Jordan Watters, Chair, Elaine Leonard, Vice-Chair, Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter and Ann Whiteaker

Sanctioned:
Trustee Diane McNally

Administration:
Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, and Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate, Superintendent, Katrina Stride, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Chuck Morris, Director, Facilities Services, Jim Soles, Associate Director, Facilities Services and Vicki Hanley, Recorder

The Board of Education discussed the following matters:

- Land
- Legal
- Governance

SECTION 72 REPORT

Present:
Trustees Jordan Watters, Chair, Elaine Leonard, Vice-Chair, Nicole Duncan (via conference phone), Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter (via conference phone) and Ann Whiteaker

Sanctioned:
Trustee Diane McNally

Administration:
Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, and Harold Caldwell, Associate, Superintendent

The Board of Education discussed the following matter:

- Privacy
- Legal

Greater Victoria
School District

Office of Trustee Paynter

TO: Board

FROM: Trustee Rob Paynter

Re: FY 2021/22 Revised budget process

DATE: 21 April 2021

Background:

The FY 21/22 District budget has come as a shock to staff, parents, and students. While it was understood by members of the Board that the district was dealing with reduced revenue from facility rentals, and international student rates, when the decision was made in 2020 to pass a rollover budget, it is nevertheless a surprise to learn that the district has apparently not pursued any sort of spending restraint over the course of the past year and is now in a position where significant cuts are proposed.

The current process has presented a single approach for moving forward with achieving a balanced budget with oblique references to increased expenditures in terms of staffing levels and contractual obligations[1]. The proposed cuts to services are highly problematic and will result in diminished supports to students in terms of enjoyment and development of life-long skills, support for our most vulnerable learners and mental health support. With respect to operating in our schools, additional workloads are being shifted to administrators ad essential collaboration and learning opportunities for teachers are being lost. More challenging, these reductions have been presented in a manner that does not permit examination of alternative approaches or even to understand the balances associated with different funding sources. Finally, questions have been raised regarding basic information, for example the number of FTEs supported by the district for middle school music programming appears to include individual school allocations meaning that both the actual costs of delivering this programming ad the potential savings from cuts have been overstated.

[1] https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2021/04/Budget-2021-2022-Special-Open-Board-SEcond-Reading-on-the-Floor-FINAL-REVISED-2021-04-13-003.pdf page 4

Rationale:

To date, the budget process has been demonstrated to be closed off and uncollaborative. Opportunities for trustees and educational partners to ask questions in public have been extremely limited and closed door "working sessions" appear to be intended to only reflect the single proposal submitted by District Administration. There appears to be no meaningful opportunity to deliberate alternatives within the budget planning process despite its extension to May 17

Alignment to the Strategic Plan: This proposal aligns with:
Goal 1
Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support and improve all learners' personal and academic success
Goal 3
Create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that will support all learners' physical and mental well-being.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Education of Greater Victoria (School District 61) direct the Superintendent immediately schedule public meetings of the Board to enable the board and district administration to collaboratively develop an annual budget based on the 2020/21 budget allocations through the review of all district (by department) and school level allocations at to include both proposed operating and special purpose funds.

- ***District department leads and school principals will be expected to submit reports in advance to the Board on resource allocations and expenditures for the past 3 years and rationales for any proposed change in resourcing to be considered in the FY 21/22 budget.***
- ***Meeting topics will be posted in advance to allow for public presentations specific to the agenda topic.***
- ***Meetings schedules will be coordinated to enable the review to be completed, budget proposal finalized and Board bylaw to be passed by May 17, 2021.***