



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

Thursday, June 3, 2021, 6:00 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 June 3, 2021 agenda be approved.

B. CORRESPONDENCE

- | | | |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| B.1. | May 28, 2021, Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to SD61, Budget Response | 3 |
| B.2. | May 30, 2021, BCEdAccess to SD61, Proposed 2021-2022 Budget | 6 |
| B.3. | May 31, 2021, VCPAC to SD61, Proposed 2021-2022 Budget | 8 |
| B.4. | June 1, 2021, GVTA to SD61, Proposed 2021-2022 Budget | 11 |

C. 2021-2022 ANNUAL BUDGET **13**

C.1. Final Readings of the Budget Bylaw

Recommended Motion:

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) 2021-2022 Annual Budget Bylaw in the amount of \$254,266,826 be:

Read a second time the 03rd day of June, 2021.

Recommended Motion:

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) 2021-2022 Annual Budget Bylaw in the amount of \$254,266,826 be:

Read a third time, passed and adopted the 03rd day of June, 2021.

And that the Secretary-Treasurer and Board Chair be authorized to sign, seal and execute the bylaw on behalf of the Board.

C.2. Business Arising from Budget Bylaw

D. NEW BUSINESS

D.1. Trustee Paynter

Recommended Motion:

That the Board of Education of School District 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to make district department heads and school administrators available for scheduled public meetings between June 1, 2021, and June 18, 2021, that are intended to:

- examine considerations included within the report submitted by Joan Axford, Independent Advisor, and
- receive information from, and ask questions of, District Department heads and school administrators,

to identify budget allocation options for School Year 21/22 culminating in a Board meeting on June 18, 2021 to pass the annual budget bylaw for School Year 2021/2022.

E. ADJOURNMENT

Recommended Motion:

That the meeting be adjourned.



Esquimalt Nation
1189 Kosapsum Crescent
Victoria, BC
V9A 7K7



Songhees Nation
1100 Admirals Rd
Victoria, BC
V9A 2P6

May 28th, 2021

Attn: Chair Watters, Shelley Green, Trustees;

The Songhees and Esquimalt Nation Education Departments have thoroughly read the Report of the Independent Review of The Budget of School District No. 61 by Joan Axford, CPA, FMCA as published May 26, 2021. Our Education Departments, alongside Chief Ron Sam and Chief Rob Thomas also met with Ms. Axford yesterday, May 27th to further our understanding of the report. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the collective priorities of both Nations as it pertains to the various Budget Options presented in Appendix A of Ms. Axford's report.

Given that Indigenous outcomes within SD61 remain well below the provincial average, we feel strongly that specific items be taken off the list of proposed cuts. If cuts to these services remain in place, we are risking the very recent steps forward that we have seen in the literacy rates of our Lekwungen learners. We also risk losing key relationships that support the holistic wellness of our students and our families. Our view of the Budget has been established through a Nation lens of what our students and our communities require for success. We must advocate passionately and unapologetically for the needs of our Nations.

We would like to refer you back to the letter sent by the Songhees Education Department which addresses the critical early intervention stages of development. Schools such as Craigflower Elementary must remain operational with current levels of support. Collectively, we request these resources/services be allocated as "untouchable" through your next phase of budget determinations. Our Nations are in a crisis due to a long and troubled history in Education; it is unfathomable to be entertaining a reduction of supports that directly impact the holistic success of Indigenous students.

The vital resources listed below are proven methods of support that have already been established. They have attributed to the success of early intervention strategies, early learning and literacy programs, and wrap around supports for our communities. Songhees and Esquimalt Nations **are not** in favor of having these services eliminated or reduced.

Counsellors to Community LINK - Our family of schools where our children attend are urban schools that serve a large number of both on reserve and off reserve populations which result in a unique set of significant learning needs with a very high vulnerability index of 100%. Our on-reserve students face higher levels of poverty, poorer health, inadequate housing and crowded living conditions, food insecurity, homes with higher exposure to violence and substance abuse, intergenerational trauma as a result of a history of colonialism and systematic racism.

- We rely on the expertise and support of qualified and culturally sensitive Youth and Family Counsellors to provide the support our students and their families require.
- These needs to be addressed before classroom learning can be effective.

Reading Recovery Coordinator Contract - Data has shown that our students are improving in reading and writing because of the additional supports the District had previously determined were required to improve outcomes. We support the one-to-one model of reading recovery as it meets the needs of readers whose skills are critically low. This model has been successful at Craigflower. We have concern that the District is proposing a **“One Size Fits All”** teacher training to all schools while taking away teacher FTE (through Reading Recovery and lessened Community Link funds).

- **We know one size fits all is not what our students require!** Historical lessons have taught us that this has not worked in the past; we should not be carrying this thinking with us into the future.
- **REALITY:** There is a language gap that exists when our students enter school. Often our students enter Kindergarten at a deficit and the gap just continues to grow if not properly addressed. Our students cannot achieve success without extensive interventions that develop background knowledge, vocabulary and proper articulation – hearing sounds in word, connecting sounds to print/comprehension. Dialectical differences also compound these issues. Considering the reality as described, it is unacceptable to us that Craigflower is looking at a **reduction** in the 0.6 speech and language assistant

Collaboration Time – this is essential in order to coordinate intensive interventions with multiple layers of support from not only classroom teachers but from the following groups that are also being looked at for cuts;

Enhanced Transition Wrap Around Supports (Compass)

Vice-Principal Admin Time Reduction

Clerical/School Assistant Hours Reduction

Reduction of EA time

Any proposed cuts to the above categories put the wrap around services required to meet the unique needs of our students in jeopardy.

- Classroom EA’s are essential to student support and in some cases the only way student’s can be at school successfully
- Data supports that the current model operating at Craigflower has shown improvements in literacy levels over the past 3 years – it is conceivable that finally our students can move forward not in a deficit, but equipped with skills that will allow them to participate more equally – goal is EQUITY. We can not afford to disrupt a program that is working
- Currently, FSA results for Grade 4 Indigenous students in SD61 are far below other provincial counterparts; there is so much more work do be done
- Support schools to preserve consistent staff and the relationships they have made with students and community – trust and safety are paramount in making progress given the history of our Nations’ relationship with the Education system
- Allow school administrators to maintain time for their critical role in relationship building, teacher support and community advocacy. Our schools need this leadership in full capacity to coordinate resources, and to support teachers, parents and students

- Do not ignore the expertise of the educators who work directly with our children. We stand in solidarity with their assessments.

We wish to acknowledge a historical gap in budget collaboration and transparency between SD61 and the Nations that has made it incredibly difficult to stay apprised of the recent proposed cuts and their direct and indirect impacts on our students. The list above is not exhaustive but is reflective of our current understanding as a result of this historical gap.

We understand that the task of balancing this budget with such a large deficit is challenging; however, taking away resources from an already marginalized group that has suffered the consequences of an inequitable system seems unethical. SD61 has resources at their disposal to find a way to fulfill their commitment to improving the outcomes for our Lekwungen students.

The two Nations stand in unity to ensure the voices of our children are heard. Through our advocacy efforts we hope that you have a clear understanding of what we see as your obligation; to provide equitable education. Our children deserve that this Right be honoured.

With Respect,



Kristely Kelly
Songhees Nation



Kalie Dyer
Esquimalt Nation



To: Board of Trustees, Greater Victoria School District 61

May 30, 2021

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to you to express BCEdAccess' complete support for everything stated in the letter to the Greater Victoria School District 61 from the Esquimalt Nation and the Songhees Nation sent May 28th, 2021. We expect that you will respect the specific rights of the Nations as you proceed with budget deliberations.

Additionally we'd like to specifically mention the family liaison position at George Jay Elementary as an essential staff person whose loss would greatly impact that school community and who should not be cut.

We would also like to remind you at this crucial time that all children and youth have the right to equitable access to education.

The purpose of the BC Human Rights Code is to foster a society where there are no impediments to free and full participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of our province. It is also intended to promote a climate of understanding, mutual respect, and equity in dignity and rights, to protect people from discrimination, to provide those people with a means of redress, and to identify and eliminate persistent patterns of inequality associated with discrimination prohibited by the Code.

Discrimination is an action or a decision that treats a person or a group badly for reasons such as their race, gender identity or expression, or disability. It's important to note that absence of intention to discriminate is not a legal defence.

The BC Human Rights Code is guided by the Canadian Human Rights Act, and Canada's Act is informed by the United Nations Human Rights Council. Around the world, inclusive education is a goal and a pursuit and our country is signatory to agreements that say we will do this.

Catalina Devandas, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities made the following comments on April 12, 2019 after looking at inclusive education in Canada:

"However, I am concerned that most provincial and territorial policies are yet to implement fully inclusive education systems and that students with disabilities in other parts of Canada may receive considerably different levels of support. I was informed that many children with disabilities are still being taught in segregated classrooms or in special education schools, and I received worrisome reports that children with disabilities can be put on partial school days or temporarily removed from school, for periods of up to six months without access to education.

I also noted a disconnection between the State's commitment to inclusion in legislation and policies, and everyday implementation in practice, reflected in long waiting time and lack of services for students with disabilities and their families, putting them under significant emotional and financial pressure. I was also informed that children with disabilities in segregated classes or those that have followed some kind of individualized education plan may receive a different certification or diploma than other children, which limits their opportunities for enrolling in education at higher levels."



A School Board budget is an excellent place to start implementing changes to move towards an inclusive model, to align with Canada's agreement to the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. So far the contention that budget proposals align with the SD61 strategic plan and therefore are a step towards addressing inequities, have not been supported by any evidence that we have seen.

We also want to re-share the Moore* case, as a reminder that any cuts to services and supports for students with disabilities must be equitable, and any loss of services to individual students that are not replaced by a comparable service is discrimination. Not providing the supports a student requires to equitably access their education is also discrimination.

We support the local community in saying that more time is needed to look at the fresh proposals received on May 28th by the Board, and one meeting will not suffice.

We urge you to not pass the budget tomorrow night, and instead to support Trustee Paynter's motion to have a more extended consultation process, with Indigenous rights holders and stakeholders.

Please include our letter in correspondence at the next public board meeting.

Sincerely,

Tracy Humphreys

Chair and Executive Director, BCEdAccess Society

*Moore v. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of the Province of British Columbia, as represented by the Ministry of Education and the Board of Education School District No. 44 (North Vancouver)

<https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/2012/2012scc61/2012scc61.html?resultIndex=1>

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/humanrights/litigation/Moore-Case-Key-Findings-9Nov2012>



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WWW.VCPAC.CA

May 31, 2021

The Greater Victoria School District 61
Board of Trustees

By email: trustees@sd61.bc.ca

Dear Trustees,

We are writing in response to your memo made public Saturday May 29, 2021 presenting additional options to balance the 2021/2022 budget and to voice the collective priorities of parents in our District as they relate to the 2021/2022 budget.

We also express our support of the comments made by Chief Ron Sam of the Songhees Nation at the end of the Board meeting on Friday May 28, 2021 advocating for this Board and its partners to refuse cuts to public education in this District at this time. We would gladly provide our time and efforts in furtherance of such advocacy.

We ask you as trustees to consider and adopt the following principles as you continue your deliberations.

- Provide equitable education:
 - Meet and exceed our obligations to Indigenous students as rights holders as well as under the Canadian Charter, provincial human rights legislation and international treaties;
 - Meet and exceed our obligations to students with disabilities and diverse abilities under the Canadian Charter, provincial human rights legislation, and international treaties;
- Meet our obligations to District staff in collective agreements and employment contracts;
- Recognise the magnitude of the harm to educational success and well-being of all students caused by the pandemic;
- Maintain and enhance quality educational programs and direct supports for students that help you provide equitable education and that help remedy the harm caused by the pandemic;
- Recognise that music programs as currently provided in this District are quality educational programming that your local community not only requires be maintained but also requires be made available equitably to those students who want to participate but need supports to do so;



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- Only introduce new spending that directly supports the full participation of vulnerable and at-risk students in public education;
- A budget process which reviews all budget areas in detail so that we can understand what programs, services and other expenditures are not being considered for cuts, and with the results of such review reported outlining that the proposed cuts and additional spending are equitable, support our principles identified above, and that there are no efficiencies or cuts to non-equitable supports or services left to make;
- If decisions are made to cut programs and services, ensure that any such cuts are to programs and services which can be readily reinstated; and
- Advocate for additional provincial funding to schools from the province, including without limitation to fully fund labour awards, to provide additional funding to enhance youth and family counsellors in schools, and to continuing funding for pandemic safety and pandemic recovery.

We are also writing to reiterate the profound loss of trust in the Board and in District administration that has resulted from this year's budget process and we urge you to proceed with a truly collaborative process built on consensus with rights-holders and stakeholders.

Presenting new options for consideration to the public on Saturday with a vote on Monday evening does not restore trust with your community. We have however reviewed the options developed by the District on May 28, 2021 and we are of the opinion that there is not enough information provided to seriously evaluate the options properly. You have not put us in a position where we can understand the implications of each proposed program or service cut, or understand how specific dollar amounts proposed to be cut from each area was determined.

We are further concerned that the options have not presented new areas of expenditures to reduce.

We also are concerned that the proposed options are only focused on this coming year's budget, and ignore the bigger question of how does it all fit into a longer term plan? For example, you mention that cutting executive level positions would create severance package liabilities in the short term. However, we would like to explore going ahead with such reductions and if working notice cannot be provided then eating into the reserve now to provide sufficient severance in order to create a better financial picture in the future.

Despite these concerns, we have developed an alternate list of options that we believe parents can support and have attached it to this letter. As you will see, in Option 2 we have identified expenditures that we would like to be reduced for the coming year.



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We would like you to update your Principles Cross Section of your Memo - Budget Options to reflect that our organisation supports using \$1.4M from local capital, using your reserve and cancelling cuts. We spoke in support of the GVTA's comments at the meeting on May 28, 2021. We are troubled by our comments not being accurately recorded and the implication from the memo that we have been consulted regarding these options.

Parents are demanding that you as Trustees build into this budget process a framework for collaboration with stakeholders and rights-holders that allows for a truly open dialogue regarding our identified priorities, concerns and options and that requires Trustees and District administration to engage directly with us. The motion brought forward by Trustee Paynter, Trustee McNally, Trustee Whiteaker and Trustee Duncan would have provided such a framework and we continue to support their motion and expect all Trustees to support it.

We remain very concerned that systemic racism and ableism, as well as a profound lack of respect for questioning voices, made visible in this year's budget and budgeting process, still informs the thinking on which the budget and options are built.

We are hopeful that you as Trustees and District administration will recognise our concerns and want to work with us to restore our trust. We suggest that the only way forward is for you to use your power to build a framework that makes space for a truly open dialogue and then engage with us accordingly both in time for this year's budget and for the years to come.

We remain committed to supporting you in meeting your obligations to provide quality educational programming equitably to students in this District.

Yours truly

Kristil Hammer

President

VICTORIA CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

Karin Kwan

Chair

Advocacy for Music in Schools

Subcommittee of

VICTORIA CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS



Greater Victoria Teachers' Association

965 Alston Street Victoria BC V9A 3S5
t. 250.595.0181 f. 250.595.0189 info@gvta.net gvta.net

Via email

June 1, 2021

Trustees
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria BC V8Z 1E8

Dear Trustees,

RE: GVSD Budget 2021/2022

This letter is to formally communicate our input on your options going forward with the budget.

At this time, we do not have enough information to provide specific feedback about the new options that have been presented. We look forward to the presentation in order to understand more.

Having heard from our members and the other stakeholders the GVTA believes there are only two options in front of you that meet the needs of our District:

1. Amend the budget.
2. Defeat the budget.

If you choose to amend this budget, we encourage you to consider:

- using funds from the accumulated operating reserve to smooth the temporary loss of revenue without permanent cuts,
- funding the equipment amount of \$1.4 million directly from local capital,
- reducing the additional budget requests and delay expenditures that need not happen this year, and
- keeping any cuts as far away from students and staffing as possible.

If you choose to vote down this budget, we encourage you to consider:

- lobbying the Provincial Government to provide adequate funding to maintain or improve services for Victoria students,

- requesting permission to carry a deficit for the 2021-22 school year,
- requesting bridge funding to compensate for the revenue shortfall related to the pandemic, and/or
- lobbying the Federal Government for a continuation of necessary Covid-19 funding.

The GVTA would be pleased to join with you and other partner groups in your advocacy efforts. Please let us know how we could best support you to this end.

If you require additional information from the GVTA or from our members, please reach out. All of our previous correspondence and presentations can be found on our website for your review: <https://www.gvta.net/sd61-budget>.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Winona Waldron

President
Greater Victoria Teachers' Association

cc: GVTA Executive Committee

	Operating	Special Purpose	Capital	Consolidated
Revenue	207,498,541	27,658,352	8,973,213	244,130,106
A. Expense	216,269,968	27,658,352	13,451,527	257,379,847
B. Shortfall	(8,771,427)	-	(4,478,314)	(13,249,741)

C. How much reserve would you like to keep if any? 821,019

D. Remaining Surplus (\$5,658,406 max-C) to balance 4,837,387

E. Updated Shortfall (B+D) (3,934,040)

F. What New Spending would you like to add? 648,945
Communications Assistant 66,945

Strong Start Learning Centre Supplement 32,000

Literacy K-5 Balanced Support (Incl RR Coordinator) 500,000

Reconciliation and Anti-Racism 50,000

G. Updated Shortfall (E-F) (4,582,985)

H. What Reductions Are You Proposing? 4,582,985
Learning Team Reduction Tolmie 416,908
Pathway & Partnerships Contingency 127,392
Counsellors out of Community LINK (Keeps YFC's) 367,318

Enhancing Learning Grants 50,000
One Learning Community 50,000
Office Supplies - Learning Team 8,750
Eco Rowing/Salmonid 2,922
Energy Utility reductions 150,000
Benefits Premium 297,600
Equity of Opportunity 718,268
Technology Refresh 329,279
Technology for Learning Staff Reduction 70,392
Clerical Reduction - Tolmie 96,994
Vice-Principal Admin Time Reduction 496,364
Clerical and/or School Assistant Reduction - Schools 342,849
Gifted Teacher Staffing Reduction 350,501
District Education Assistant Reduction - Victor 42,084

International Program Staffing Reduction 592,364
Reading Recovery Coordinator Contract (out of Literacy) 73,000

I. Updated Shortfall (if \$0 then balanced) (G-H) -

New bylaw amount (B+C+F-H)	213,156,947	27,658,352	13,451,527	254,266,826
	Must match to (max revenue & surplus):			254,266,826

Summary	
Reserve	821,019
New Spending	648,945
reductions	4,582,985
Use of Surplus	4,837,387

Spending

COVID-19 Contingency	105,559
October District Pro-D Day	10,000
Early Learning Framework	40,000
Enhanced Wrap Around Supports (COMPASS)	86,000
Learning Series	7,500
Laptop Inventory for Temporary Teachers	100,000
Network Infrastructure	406,350

reductions

		On-going
		One-time
		On-going
Collaboration Time	276,163	On-going
		On-going
		On-going
		On-going
		On-going
		One-time
		On-going
		On-going
		On-going
		On-going
		On-going
		On-going
Indigenous Education Clerical Hours Reallocation	27,787	On-going
		On-going
		On-going
Education Assistant Reduction	285,907	On-going
Music/Band/Strings/Choir	780,114	On-going