



Board of Education

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
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Chair: Ryan Painter Vice-Chair: Tom Ferris
Trustees: Nicole Duncan, Angie Hentze, Elaine Leonard,
Diane McNally, Rob Paynter, Jordan Watters, Ann Whiteaker

January 19, 2022

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

BY E-MAIL: EDUC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Minister of Finance
PO Box 9048 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

BY E-MAIL: FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca

ATTENTION: Honourable Jennifer Whiteside and Honourable Selina Robinson

Dear Ministers Whiteside and Robinson:

RE: Capital Funding for Electric Buses

At its Regular Board meeting of December 13, 2021, the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) carried the following resolution:

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) write a letter to the Minister of Education and Minister of Finance to request that, going forward, the level of funding for bus replacement be set at the cost of the purchase price for electric buses; AND FURTHER that the Board understands that the current schedule of bus replacement is based on age and mileage of the vehicle and that the funding standard is applied against the cost of a diesel or gas-driven vehicle rather than an electric vehicle.

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.

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School Districts are in a unique position to show leadership in mitigating and adapting to address the impacts of climate change. We are a member of the public sector, with a unique and special responsibility to not only manage our resources, such as our buildings and infrastructure in an environmentally sustainable manner, but to also support an environmental ethic. This includes the importance of sustainability in our educational programs.

This runs up against a challenging reality; the current provincial approach to school district capital funding limits school district's ability to address joint provincial and local obligations to reduce emissions. This results in districts being unable to take more meaningful and effective steps to address the climate emergency through environmentally sustainable investments in our capital assets.

In its 2021-2022 Annual Five Year Capital Plan, the Board applied for four electric buses. The Board was subsequently successful in receiving \$883,792 Ministry of Education funding and a further \$474,540 Clean BC funding for buses valued at \$1,503,040. The funding shortfall of \$194,708 was left to the Board to finance.

Funding the shortfall from operating or local capital funds comes at the cost of direct service to our students, staff and families that would otherwise be spent on instruction, health and safety, and learning and work environments. The funding shortfall disincentivizes school districts from electrification of its transportation fleets and in districts with no ability to fund the shortfall, eliminates the electric bus option altogether.

Students in School District No. 61, and around the world, are calling on leadership to do something to secure their access to a safe and livable planet for their futures. The Board of School District No. 61 is committed to doing its part in reducing emissions and creating the very future our students are calling for. Therefore, the Board requests the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance to do their parts and fully fund electrification of busses in the 2022-2023 school year and subsequent capital planning years.

Sincerely,



Ryan Painter
Chair, Board of Education

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Cc: Board of Education, SD61
Deb Whitten, Superintendent, SD61
Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, SD61
Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities
Chris Brown, Deputy Minister, Education
Heather Wood, Deputy Minister, Finance
BC School Boards

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