

Supporting Inclusion in Kindergarten in School District 61's Most Vulnerable Schools

lək^wəŋən Traditional Territory
Həyšx^wqə - Thank you

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My Background: Why I Care

(and why you should care who I am)

- A **Graduate** from SD61
 - I know the **disparities between schools** are **long standing**.
- A **Current Parent** of a child in SD61
 - My son is in grade one.
 - My daughter will start Kindergarten next year.
 - A **voter** who voted for you each one of you, and encouraged my community to elect you
- A **Teacher** witnessessing the huge gaps that start in Elementary School.

What I Now Know: Kindergarten Needs Support

- By **meeting students' needs** from the moment they enter our building, we will **set them up for future success**.
- When their **needs are met**, they will **feel safe** and can **learn what is expected** of them.
- They will be able to become **successful learners**.
- Currently, **their needs are not met**, and **safety needs and concerns rise**, and **learning does not occur**.
- And we continue to focus on, **“safety before learning.”**

Provincial Guidelines - Are We Meeting Them?

BC Ministry of Education's Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide: *Kindergarten students with complex special needs are particularly vulnerable when they enter school. Early intervention is important for these learners, and these interventions can be more intense in a full day Kindergarten program. [S]chool districts, independent school authorities, and schools should consider how best to serve each individual student with special needs to ensure their full participation in a community of learners with interventions to support their learning.*

BC's Early Learning Framework: *The revised Early Learning Framework recognizes the important role of "education as the central driver in achieving equal opportunities with a vision to transform lives through education and guarantee the full development of and blossoming of children from their earliest years."*

Greater Victoria School District's Promise

A word cloud visualization of the Greater Victoria School District's Promise. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape, with the most prominent words being 'student', 'learning', 'within', 'each', 'responsive', 'community', 'student's', and 'safe'. Other words include 'experience', 'success', 'fulfill', 'Every', 'Victoria', 'District', 'pursue', 'establishes', 'School', 'Greater', 'class', 'environment', 'foundation', 'inclusive', 'positive', 'well-being', 'made', 'remainder', 'provide', 'world-class', 'nurture', 'committed', 'educational', 'Kindergarten', 'has', 'effort', 'will', 'opportunity', 'lifelong', 'potential', and 'aspirations'.

experience success
potential fulfill Every Victoria
lifelong student District
opportunity pursue establishes School
will within learning their Greater
effort each our aspirations class
Kindergarten responsive environment
has educational committed community foundation
world-class nurture inclusive
provide student's positive
remainder safe well-being
made

SD 61's Contributions and My Requests

- I am **grateful** for the **hard work** of my **School-Based Team**, all of **my colleagues**, and the **contributions the district** has made to our Kindergarten program.

School District's Contributions	Additional Request
Gradual Entry and Welcoming Conversations	Super grateful for this district-supported program! It is so valuable to build relationships with families and get to know the needs of our students .
ECEs in Vulnerable Schools	Needs to be in addition to EA support, not to replace an EA position.
District LST Visits	These need to occur in September .
Frontloaded, Additional EA support in K classes	District-provided EAs in Kindergarten for first term to create success for students as they enter our system.

Plans, Hopes, and Goals... Kindergarten Matters

- *I invite you all to visit my classroom.*
- We have the **power to meet our students' needs** in September.
- We **know the supports that are consistently needed** each year.
- We **focus on “safety before learning,”** in increasingly **dire circumstances.**
- We **need additional adult support in Kindergarten** classrooms to **meet the needs** of our students
- We **need to act now.**

Conclusion

I challenge you to recognize the classism that is evident in our most vulnerable schools.

In my opinion, children leaving the English Kindergarten program at Quadra have an inequitable introduction to education to that of their peers' from more affluent backgrounds. Because, let's remember, at Quadra, **safety before learning**.

After decades of living, learning and teaching in Victoria, I have to ask: Do "we" want it to stay this way? Should affluent schools always be more successful than vulnerable schools? But, it has to be that way, because... **safety before learning**.