



# Board of Education

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)  
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*Chair: Nicole Duncan Vice-Chair: Karin Kwan*  
*Trustees: Natalie Baillaut, Angela Carmichael, Mavis David,*  
*Derek Gagnon, Emily Mahbobi, Diane McNally, Rob Paynter*

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8 August, 2023

Honourable Rachna Singh  
Minister of Education and Child Care  
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
[ecc.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ecc.minister@gov.bc.ca)

Honourable Mike Farnworth  
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
PO Box 9010 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
[PSSG.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PSSG.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

**ATTENTION:** Honourable Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care  
Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Dear Minister Singh, and Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Farnworth:

**RE: Research into SPLO Program Impacts**

The Board of Education of School District No.61 (Greater Victoria) unanimously passed the following motion:

*That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Board Chair to write to the Minister of Education and Child Care and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General urging them to immediately commission research into the impacts of SPLO programs on K-12 students in BC.*

We know that there has been limited research into the impacts of School Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) programs on K-12 students in British Columbia or other jurisdictions across Canada. Last year the Human Rights Commissioner of British Columbia wrote to Boards of Education highlighting the need for research conducted in British Columbia that centers on the experience of racialized youth and other marginalized students using high quality evaluation strategies. The Human Rights Commissioner's Office recently funded research on the state of school liaison officer programs in Canada conducted by Dr. Kanika Samuels-Wortley, assistant professor with the Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Carleton University. According to Dr. Samuels-Wortley's findings the research across jurisdictions suggest that students generally feel safe at school regardless of whether a SPLO is in their school, and some of the most

methodologically sound research concludes that there is no evidence to support the idea that SPLO programs make schools safer.

Canadian research tends to focus on the perspectives of police rather than K-12 students. Dr. Samuels-Wortley's research revealed no peer-reviewed studies exploring the impacts of SPLO programs on marginalized students. We need to understand the impacts of SPLO programs on racialized and other marginalized youth including 2SLGBTQIA+ students and students with disabilities. With limited local school district resources available to carry out methodologically sound research, our school district's SPLO program survey was of limited methodological and empirical value. Most of the respondents identified as White (69%) and most of these respondents were parents of elementary aged children without any direct interaction with SPLOs. Further, since 2018 our school district has not had SPLOs in schools located in Victoria and Esquimalt.

Research conducted in other jurisdictions such as the United States reveals that SPLOs make marginalized students feel less safe at school, and that SPLOs discipline Black students and students with disabilities at disproportionately high rates in the United States. With a lack of disaggregated data available in British Columbia, it is unclear whether this is true of police in British Columbia. However, in November 2021, the Human Rights Commissioner of British Columbia published [\*Equity is Safer: Human Rights considerations for policing reform in British Columbia\*](#) which was submitted to the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act of the Legislature of British Columbia. We would highlight that the Human Rights Commissioner points to a number of concerns such as a trend of over policing of racialized people in British Columbia, including being "either grossly or significantly overrepresented in arrest/chargeable incident statistics", and in some police jurisdictions in British Columbia racialized people are significantly overrepresented in police interactions involving people experiencing mental health issues.

Out of respect for the well-being and the rights of all students attending K-12 schools in British Columbia we urge you to immediately commission research into the impacts of SPLO programs on students in British Columbia. We trust you will also see the importance of commissioning research into the impacts of SPLO programs on K-12 students in British Columbia, with a particular emphasis on the experience of marginalized students. We appreciate you taking time to consider our request and we would be pleased to discuss these matters at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Nicole Duncan  
Chair, Board of Education  
School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)

cc: Board of Education, School District No. 61  
Deb Whitten, Superintendent, School District No. 61  
Katrina Stride, Secretary-Treasurer, School District No. 61  
Jane Massy, President, CUPE 947, School District No. 61  
Paul Knapik, President, CUPE 382, School District No. 61  
Ilda Turcotte, President, Greater Victoria Teachers' Association  
Tracy Humphreys, President, Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, School District No. 61  
Jeanette Alexander, President, Allied Specialists' Association, School District No. 61  
Brenna O'Connor, President, Victoria Principals and Vice-Principals Association, School District No. 61  
Kasari Govender, Human Rights Commissioner of British Columbia