



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

January 17, 2025

Ministry of Education and Child Care
Office of the Minister
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Email: ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

ATTENTION: Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Education and Child Care

Dear Minister Beare,

We write in response to your letter of January 14, 2025 to the Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (VCPAC), which has been shared with all PACs in SD61.

As you know, we take issue with the suggestion that “appropriate partners’ perspectives” informed the Special Advisor’s safety plan. Respectfully, your letter mischaracterizes the motions passed by the Board on December 11, 2024, as it suggests that the Board motions directed which specific parties should participate in the Framework Table and The Implementation Table. They did not. The motions passed were as follows:

That the Board of Education of School District No.61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent (who will Chair the working group), Chair and Vice-Chair to undertake the work set out in the Ministerial Orders by participating in the working group (framework table) and provide the Board with updates as needed.

That the Board of Education of School District No.61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to undertake the work set out in the Ministerial Order by preparing an implementation plan (implementation table) and bringing back recommendations to the Board of Education for approval.

The participants at those sessions were chosen by the Special Advisor. The deadline imposed under Ministerial Order M406/24 required a large amount of work to be done over the holiday season, which in turn meant that many of the educational partners with whom the Board

would have wished to consult, including VCPAC, the GVTA, and others, did not have a chance to provide feedback as part of the Framework Table process. In their absence, the Framework Table feedback appears to have wholly guided the Special Advisor's draft safety plan. One of our concerns, as expressed in our memorandum, is that the feedback offered by Safer Schools Together suggesting the Board's November safety plan lacked detail appears to have been entirely overlooked by the Special Advisor, whose January 2nd draft plan is manifestly less detailed than the Board's November submission. For that reason, and for the other reasons set out in the Board's memorandum, the Board's preferred option is the Further Revised Safety Plan which was provided at Schedule "A" to that memorandum.

Equally concerning is the mention in your letter that you are "increasingly concerned about the reports and indications of governance challenges," and various other similar recent public statements. Please explain what "reports and indications of governance challenges" you are referring to. While the Board found it necessary at times during this process to remind the Special Advisor, and staff following his direction, of the Board's statutory responsibilities and jurisdiction, there are no "governance challenges" the Board is aware of – and any "reports" to the contrary are not something that has been brought to the Board's attention.

The safety of students is, and always has been, the Board's highest concern. The Board is entirely united in its desire to ensure that law enforcement can contribute to that goal in ways that are appropriate, respect the human rights of students, give comfort to parents, and provide for necessary oversight and review.

The Board looks forward to continuing to work with police services, Indigenous Rightsholders, and other educational and community partners towards that aim.

Yours truly,



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
Braden Hutchins, Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (VCPAC)