

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
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A message from the Board of Education:

The Greater Victoria Board of Education understands the importance of open communication, especially when it comes to topics that spark strong feelings within our community. We'd like to address and clarify certain misinformation about the Greater Victoria Board of Education's recent submission of draft safety plans to the Minister of Education and Child Care, and the issue of school police liaison officers generally. Please see the key messages below and links to additional information and resources.

- The Board has a duty to oversee **all** educational programs being delivered in schools. The safety plan approved by police would potentially give police full control of the SPLO program, and provide for no accountability or oversight. The Board's preferred plan allows for the key elements of the police-approved plan, but retains oversight by the Board.
- **Police are already, and will continue to be, allowed in schools.** The Board of Education has not limited police access to schools. The Board's decision to decline to renew the SPLO program does not prohibit police from entering schools or school grounds.
- **Police have always worked with Victoria schools**, including since the SPLO program ended, and the board values their expertise and input. The decision to end funding for the SPLO program in 2018 was that of the police, not the board.
- The Board of Education's approved safety plan reflects the evolving needs of students and families. The police-approved safety plan included no provisions to protect the rights of students, or any commitment to communicate to parents/guardians about interactions at school between police and their children. The Board's preferred plan addresses these gaps.
- Police continue to provide a range of services within SD61 schools such as violent threat risk assessments, hold and secure/lockdown drills and other appropriate supports.
- Nothing limits police from volunteering in schools or attending events in the same manner as any other member of the community.

Information & Resources:

- The Board recently concluded a multi-year review of the SPLO program and found an initiative that had not been actively monitored. It lacked a clear purpose, defined guidelines, specific roles, or responsibilities, and there was no system of accountability in place. Further information about the SPLO program, and the Board's concerns, can be found at <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/splo-faq/>.
- The Board believes that formalizing expectations to ensure any and all services provided by police in District schools are clearly outlined and subject to appropriate oversight, is an essential part of supporting school safety and protecting student rights. This is the expectation of any external partner delivering programs in SD61 schools. The Board's submission to the Minister of Education and Child Care can be found at <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/news/title/safety-plan-update-jan-6/>.