



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall, 1229 Esquimalt Road, Victoria, B.C. V9A 3P1
Website: www.esquimalt.ca Email: info@esquimalt.ca

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File No. 0550-11

March 19, 2025

Sherri Bell, Official Trustee
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

Via email to: officialtrustee@sd61.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Bell:

Re: Trustee Electoral Area election model

The Township of Esquimalt wishes to congratulate you on your recent appointment as the Official Trustee for the Greater Victoria School District No. 61 (SD 61).

As part of your mandate to restore good governance, strong relationships and partnerships for the Greater Victoria School District 61 Board, I am pleased to advise you that these are values that the Township of Esquimalt shares as an important part of our own strategic priorities.

In supporting these priorities, the Township of Esquimalt Council passed the following motion at our March 4, 2025 Special Council meeting:

“WHEREAS: The vast majority of B.C. School Districts that serve multiple municipalities have implemented a Trustee Electoral Area election model whereby local communities each separately elect their own School Trustee representative(s) to help optimize fair and equitable school board representation among the various municipalities,

AND WHEREAS: Part 4 – Division 1 – Section 30 of the BC School Act grants authority to the Minister of Education to approve and implement a more fair and equitable Trustee Electoral Area election model for electing school board trustees,

AND WHEREAS: the previously elected Greater Victoria School District 61 Board of Education has now been terminated, and a new Board of Education will not be elected until October 2026

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Esquimalt ask the Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Education and Child Care, to direct School District 61 to create an inclusive and collaborative task force to consider a Trustee Electoral Area election model for the Minister’s ultimate consideration of approval for implementation in time for the 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections.



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AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township of Esquimalt author letters to School District 61 official trustee Sherri Bell, the City of Victoria, District of Saanich, District of Oak Bay, Town of View Royal, District of Highlands, the Songhees Nation and Kosapsum (Esquimalt) Nation, as well as area MLAs within School District 61 to inform them of the Township's request to the Minister of Education and Child Care."

Under Part 4 - Division 1 - Section 30 of the BC School Act, the Minister is granted the authority to allow for a Trustee Electoral Area election model for electing school board trustees. Many school districts across British Columbia that serve multiple municipalities have already adopted this model, allowing each community to elect its own School Trustee representative(s) to promote fair and equitable representation on the school board.

The Township of Esquimalt believes that an SD 61-led task force—designed to be inclusive and collaborative with the communities served by SD 61—would be the most effective way to explore, define, and propose designated Trustee Electoral Area boundaries. This proposal could then be submitted for the Minister's consideration and implemented in time for the 2026 Local Government elections.

We are eager for the chance to collaborate with you on the crucial issue of school board representation. Therefore, we kindly ask for your support in our appeal to the Minister. We understand that your decision will involve consultations with every municipality and Indigenous community within SD 61. By addressing this matter promptly, we ensure ample time to establish a Trustee Electoral Area model for the 2026 Local Government elections, should the Minister decide to implement this beneficial change for our school district.

Sincerely,

Mayor Barbara Desjardins

Attachments:

Appendix A - Election Systems for CRD School Districts

Appendix B - List of BC School Districts that Elect Trustees Proportionally
by Community/Trustee Electoral Areas