



# ESQUIMALT NATION

1189 Kosapsum Crescent  
Victoria, BC  
V9A 7K7

March 31, 2025

## **Re: Support for Electoral Area Representation in School Board Elections**

Dear Honorable Minister Beare, Minister of Education and Child Care

On behalf of Chief and Council of Esquimalt Nation, we are writing to express our strong support for the transition from an “at large” election model to an electoral area model for school trustee elections within our region. We further call for the formal inclusion of designated seats on the Board of Education for the two local Nations whose territories the school district resides on.

The current “at large” model positions the community to have unequal representation for smaller or geographically distinct areas. An electoral area model offers an opportunity to improve democratic participation, increase local accountability, and ensure that decisions about education reflect the unique priorities and lived experiences of diverse communities within the school district.


For Esquimalt Nation, this issue is deeply connected to our inherent rights as Indigenous peoples. Our students attend local schools governed by the Board of Education, yet the Nation has limited say in the decision-making processes that affect our learners. This gap contradicts the Province of British Columbia’s commitment to advancing reconciliation through the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). Designating seats for the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations is not simply a gesture of inclusion—it is a step toward Indigenous jurisdiction, self-determination, and reconciliation. It ensures that educational governance is informed by the voices, values, and priorities of the First Peoples on whose lands the school district operates.

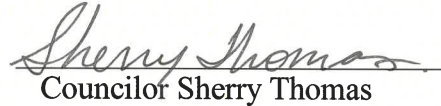
The province has made significant commitments to Indigenous students through the Equity in Action Framework and Local Education Agreements (LEAs). Expanding our presence into governance structures is a natural and necessary next step. We urge the Ministry of Education and Child Care to support both the shift to an electoral area model and the establishment of designated Indigenous representation on school boards.

We are open and eager to engage with the Ministry, the school district, and other partners to co-develop a path forward that ensures equity, accountability, and Indigenous self-determination in public education.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your response and to working together in the spirit of respect, recognition, and reconciliation.


Sincerely,

  
Chief Jerome Thomas

  
Councilor Sherry Thomas

  
Councilor Anastasia Thomas

  
Councilor Alicia Thomas

  
Councilor Edward Thomas Jr.

Cc: Sherri Bell, Official Trustee, School District No.61  
Hon. Darlene Rotchford, MLA Esquimalt-Colwood  
Hon. Diana Gibson, MLA Oak Bay-Gordon Head  
Hon. Grace Lore, MLA Victoria- Beacon Hill  
Hon. Lana Popham, MLA Saanich-South  
Hon. Nina Krieger, MLA Victoria-Swan Lake  
Township of Esquimalt  
Town of View Royal  
District of Highlands  
District of Oak Bay  
District of Saanich  
Songhees Nation  
City of Victoria