

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Greater Victoria School District Adopts New School Trustee Electoral Model

VICTORIA, BC – The Greater Victoria School District's proposal to shift from an 'at large' electoral model to a model with seven trustee electoral areas based on existing municipal and First Nations reserve boundaries has been accepted by the Minister of Education and Child Care.

The multiple electoral area model is used by many school districts in the province, especially by those that span several municipalities.

The Official Trustee of SD61 undertook an open and transparent consultation with the public and a Task Force was created to closely consider critical aspects of shifting to trustee electoral areas. The Task Force consisted of representatives from the Greater Victoria School District; Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation; municipalities of Esquimalt, Highlands, Oak Bay, Saanich, Victoria, and View Royal; and the Capital Regional District. The proposal was a result of this work.

"I thank the Task Force for engaging in honest conversations that ultimately led to the Trustee Electoral Area Variation Proposal submitted to the Ministry in late September," says **Sherri Bell, Official Trustee, Board of Education, Greater Victoria School District**. "I extend my gratitude to the community for their genuine curiosity and thoughtful questions throughout the engagement process. We look forward to updating the community with more information about election logistics, how to become a school trustee, and changes voters can expect."

The Task Force discussions and now-approved changes honour the District's and local governments' commitment to active participation in truth and reconciliation and the importance of working with Indigenous People and Rightsholders to support self-governance. This work aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action, as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The proposal was submitted to the Ministry on September 26, 2025, which requested that, pursuant to Section 30 (4) of the School Act, the Minister consider making a variation order to reflect the proposed changes prior to the next school trustee election to be held on October 17, 2026.

There are no proposed changes to the number of trustees, which will remain at nine and be distributed amongst the electoral areas as follows: Esquimalt Nation (1), Songhees Nation (1), Highlands/View Royal (1), Esquimalt (1), Victoria (2), Saanich (2), and Oak Bay (1).

Background Information

In October 2024, the Greater Victoria School District Board of Education received a letter from the Township of Esquimalt with a request to consider multiple trustee electoral areas. Subsequently the Official Trustee received a similar letter in March 2025 from the Township of Esquimalt. Letters of support were also sent to the Ministry from other local municipalities and First Nations in 2025.

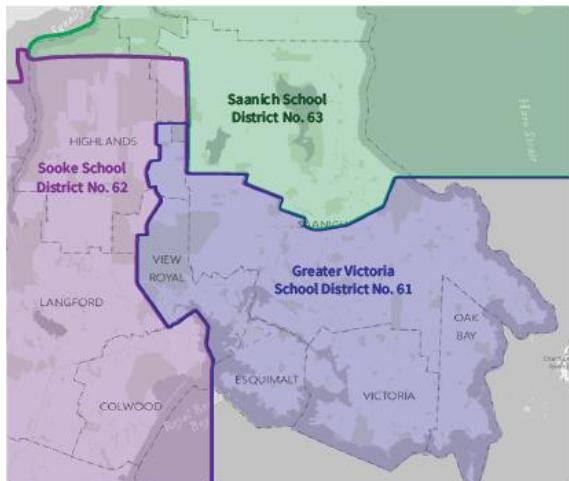
A Task Force was formed inclusive of representatives from the Greater Victoria School District; Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation; municipalities of Esquimalt, Highlands, Oak Bay, Saanich, Victoria, and View Royal; and the Capital Regional District. The Task Force met four times over four months to discuss a potential proposal for multiple trustee electoral areas within the Greater Victoria School District. In addition, meetings were conducted with each First Nation to hear their views. The collective discussions resulted in a proposed variation to the existing 'at large' electoral model.

The proposed variation was shared with the public on August 5, 2025, with the launch of an online feedback form which remained open until September 11, 2025, as well as during an in-person consultation session co-hosted by the Task Force on September 9, 2025.

More information: <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/board-of-education/trustee-electoral-areas/>

Maps:

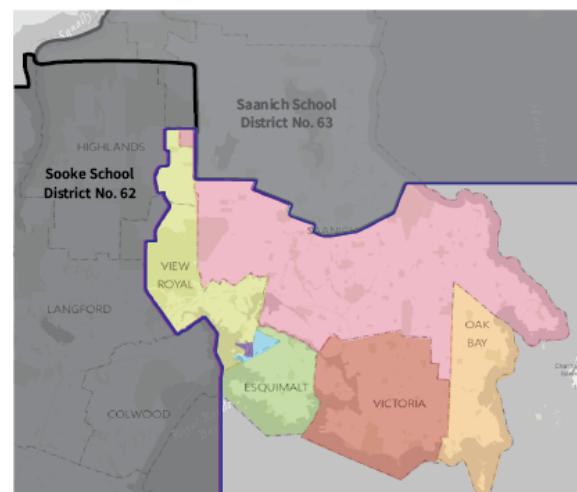
Greater Victoria School District Boundary as Consistent with an "At Large" Singular Electoral Area Model



Legend

- Greater Victoria School District No. 61 (i.e. singular 'at large' electoral area)
- Sooke School District No. 62
- Saanich School District No. 63

Map of Seven New Electoral Areas of the Greater Victoria School District



Legend

- Greater Victoria School District Boundary
- Trustee Electoral Area 1: Esquimalt Nation (1 Trustee)
- Trustee Electoral Area 2: Songhees Nation (1 Trustee)
- Trustee Electoral Area 3: Highlands / View Royal (1 Trustee)
- Trustee Electoral Area 4: Esquimalt (1 Trustee)
- Trustee Electoral Area 5: Victoria (2 Trustees)
- Trustee Electoral Area 6: Saanich (2 Trustees)
- Trustee Electoral Area 7: Oak Bay (1 Trustee)

About the Greater Victoria School District

The Greater Victoria School District No. 61 (the District) is situated on the traditional territories of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and spans the municipalities of Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Victoria, and portions of the Highlands, Saanich, and View Royal.

The District is proud to provide quality education for more than 20,000 students in 28 elementary schools (Kindergarten to Grade 5), 10 middle schools (Grades 6-8), and seven secondary schools (Grades 9-12). More than 1,000 International Students from across the globe attend schools in the District, and each year, over 650 adult learners register in the Continuing Education Program. The District also offers a variety of Programs of Choice, including French Immersion.

Media Contacts

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