



Greater Victoria School District No. 61

September 26, 2025

Trustee Electoral Area Variation Proposal

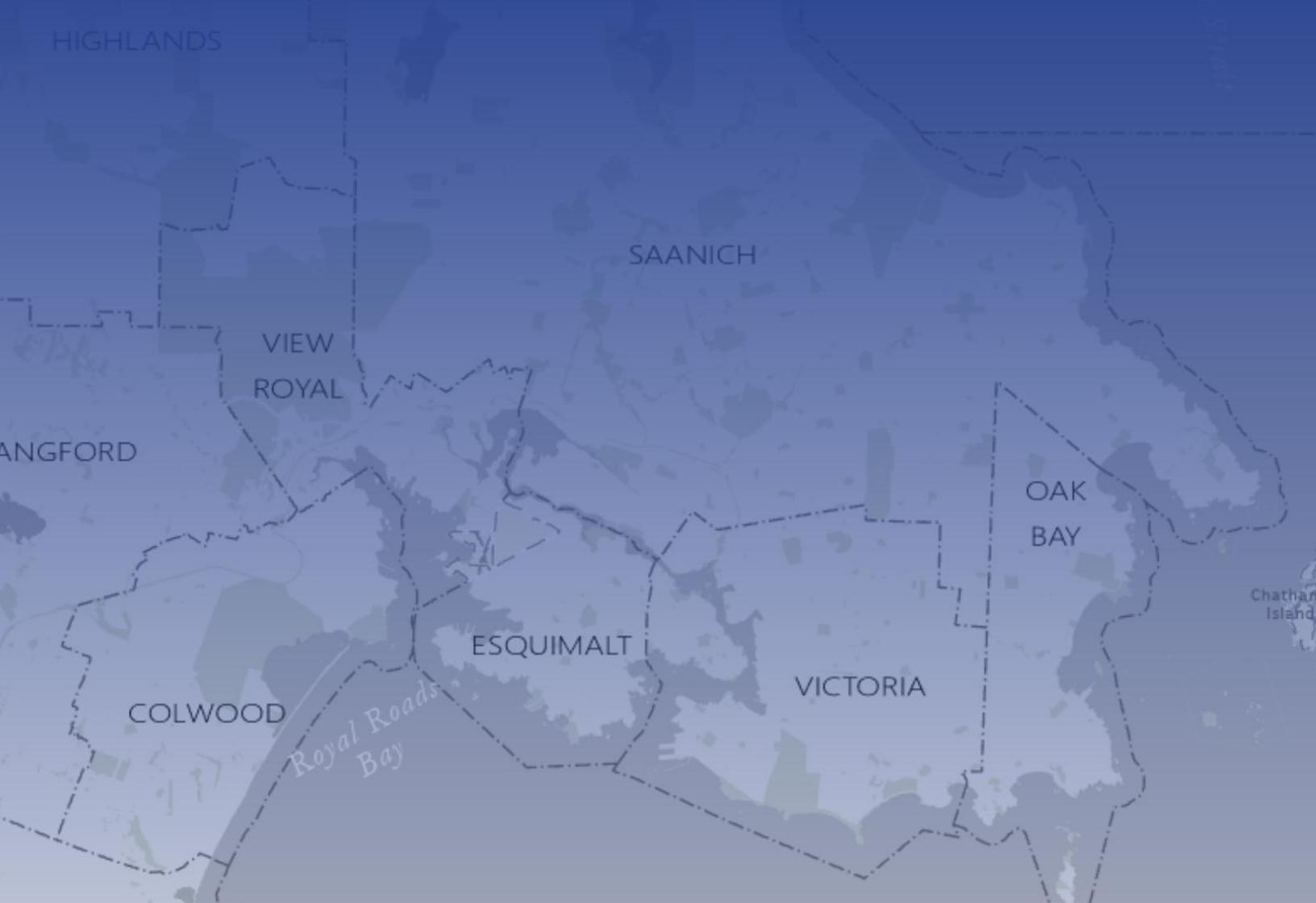


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Background Information

The Greater Victoria School District (GVSD) No. 61 is one of three school districts on lower Vancouver Island and is situated on the traditional lands of the lək'wənən People, known today as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. The GVSD boundary includes the Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation reserves, as well as the municipalities of Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Victoria, and portions of the Highlands, Saanich, and View Royal.

On October 9, 2024, the GVSD Board of Education received a letter from the Township of Esquimalt inquiring about the consideration of multiple trustee electoral areas within the GVSD and the potential to implement such a model. The GVSD Board of Education also received a letter in support from the District of Highlands on October 22, 2024. These letters are included in the November 25, 2024 Regular Board Meeting agenda package, of which the minutes reflect a statement that the letters should be addressed to the Minister of Education and Child Care.

On March 19, 2025, both the Official Trustee and the Ministry of Education and Child Care received a letter from the Township of Esquimalt, again requesting a consideration for multiple trustee electoral areas.

The GVSD is aware of letters of support for the Township of Esquimalt's request which were expressed to the Ministry of Education and Child Care (in order between March 21, 2025 to April 28, 2025) by the Town of View Royal, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, the District of Oak Bay, and the District of Highlands.

The Official Trustee of the GVSD formed a Task Force inclusive of representatives from the GVSD; Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation; municipalities of Esquimalt, Highlands, Oak Bay, Saanich, Victoria, and View Royal; and the Capital Regional District (who supports in conducting elections for the two local First Nations). The Task Force met four times over four months to discuss a potential proposal for multiple trustee electoral areas within the GVSD. In addition, the Official Trustee also conducted a meeting with Esquimalt Nation and another meeting with Songhees Nation to hear their views. The collective discussions resulted in a proposed variation to the existing 'at large' electoral model, which was shared with the public through consultation and is detailed in this document.

The Task Force discussions and the proposed changes honour the GVSD's and local governments' commitment to and active participation in truth and reconciliation and the importance of working with First Nations 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.

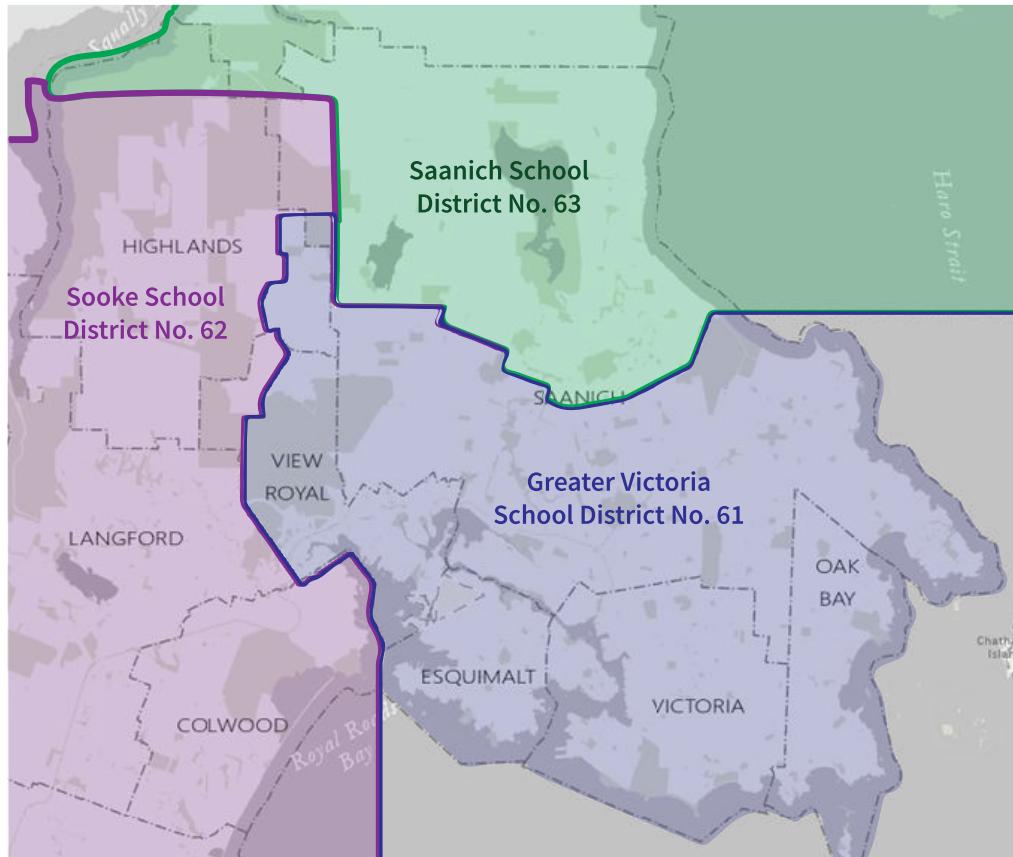
This proposal is organized in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Child Care's Trustee Variation Guidelines and contains a request that the Minister consider making a variation order pursuant to section 30 (4) of the *Schol Act*, prior to the next general school election to be held on October 17, 2026. A letter with this document enclosed was submitted to the Ministry of Education and Child Care on September 26, 2025.

Current Trustee Electoral Area

The GVSD currently elects nine school board trustees using an ‘at large’ model where the whole body of registered voters within GVSD boundaries vote for the election of all eligible candidates. In this model, there is only one electoral area which is equal to the GVSD boundary. Each voter in the region receives the same list of school board trustee candidates on their voter ballot.

Map

The map below shows where the current sole trustee electoral area (in blue) for GVSD lies relative to its neighbouring school districts, Sooke School District No. 62 (purple) and Saanich School District No. 63 (green).



Population

As of July 1, 2024, according to Stats Canada, there are 256,449 residents living within the GVSD boundary (the sole electoral area).

Proposed Trustee Electoral Areas

The proposed model is a shift from an ‘at large’ electoral model to one with seven trustee electoral areas. There are no proposed changes to the number of trustees, which remains at nine.

Proposed Electoral Area Names, Number of Trustees, and Population

The names of all seven proposed electoral areas and the number of trustees proposed to represent each area are listed in the table below. Proposed electoral areas are largely based on existing municipal and First Nations reserve boundaries, save for the portions of View Royal and Highlands which are to be combined to form one electoral area.

The populations of each proposed electoral area are also listed in the table below. Please note that the populations for View Royal, Highlands, and Saanich only refer to the population living within the portions of those municipalities that lie within the GVSD boundary. It is important to note that the population data in the table is based on home addresses of residents living in that area and, specifically in reference to the populations of the First Nations reserves, do not reflect the number of band members or people with Indigenous status.

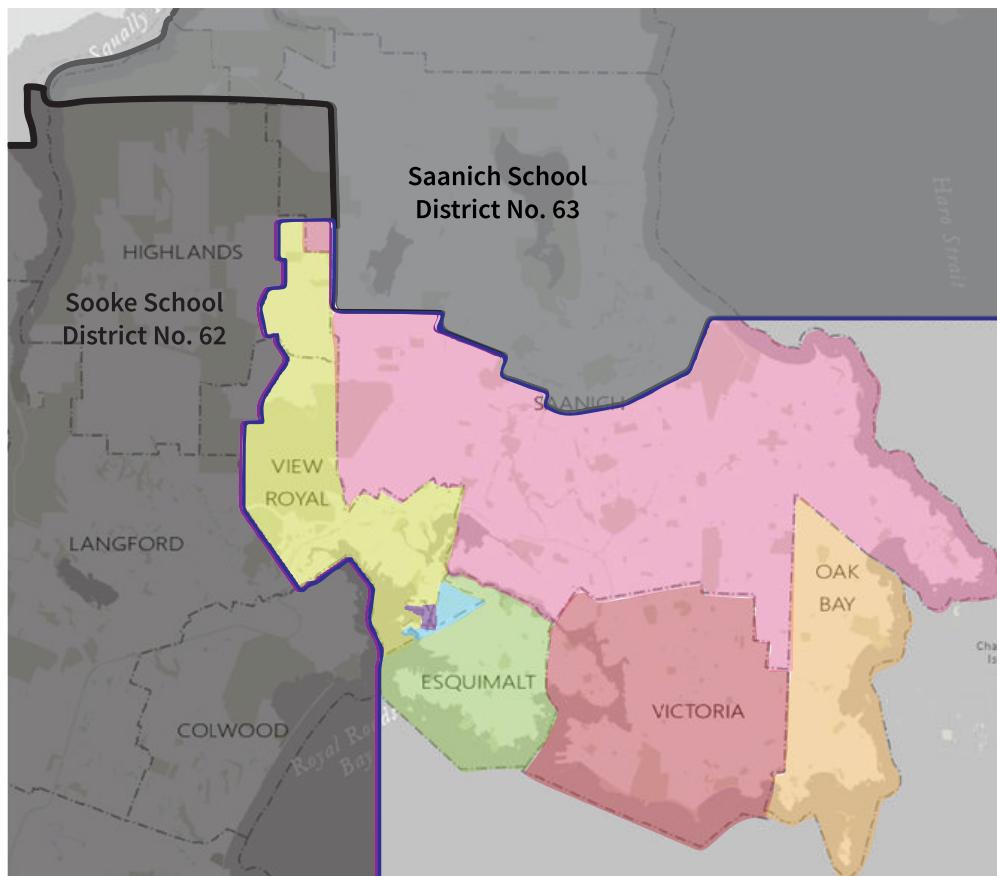
Proposed Electoral Area Names	Number of Trustees	Population (i.e. Residents) BC Stats as of July 1, 2024
Esquimalt Nation	1	132
Songhees Nation	1	2,057
View Royal / Highlands	1	12,917*
Oak Bay	1	18,813
Esquimalt	1	19,302
Saanich	2	100,372*
Victoria	2	102,856
TOTAL	9	256,449

*Data represents portions of these municipalities that lie within the GVSD boundary

Metes and Bounds

The Greater Victoria School District has contracted a professional land surveyor to satisfy the requirement of including a “metes and bounds description of each area prepared or approved by a certified professional surveyor” within this proposal.

Map



Legend

- Greater Victoria School District Boundary**
- Proposed Electoral Area:** Esquimalt Nation (1 Trustee)
- Proposed Electoral Area:** Songhees Nation (1 Trustee)
- Proposed Electoral Area:** Highlands / View Royal (1 Trustee)
- Proposed Electoral Area:** Oak Bay (1 Trustee)
- Proposed Electoral Area:** Esquimalt (1 Trustee)
- Proposed Electoral Area:** Saanich (2 Trustees)
- Proposed Electoral Area:** Victoria (2 Trustees)

Rationale

The rationale for the changes requested can be summarized into four themes.

Truth and Reconciliation

As a school district, we recognize the importance of redressing the legacy of residential schools and doing so with care, patience, and with a good heart. It is crucial that we restore the relationships with those who have taken care of these lands since time immemorial.

There are three documents that are instruments of reconciliation that should be considered together:

- **10 Principles of Reconciliation:** a guide to assist in repairing the damaged relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):** a framework for the establishment and maintenance of mutually respectful relationships. Of note is Article 4 which sets the standard of achievement that Indigenous peoples “have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs.”
- **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action:** actions to mobilize levels of government, organizations, and individuals to make concrete changes in society and redress the legacy of residential schools. Calls to Action 62 through to 65 (Education for Reconciliation) are particularly relevant.

As we work together to address truth and reconciliation as a school district, and with local government partners, we aim to prioritize and uplift the voices of local First Nations. All members of the Task Force were in support of allocating two electoral areas to equal the boundaries of each of the Esquimalt First Nation and Songhees First Nation reserves.

During Task Force meetings, both Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation requested to be able to appoint a trustee within each of their electoral areas. The existing *School Act* does not allow for the appointment of trustees from First Nations (or other groups/individuals) and a change to the *School Act* would not be feasible in time for the 2026 election. Looking forward, the GVSD is committed to working with local First Nations and the Ministry of Education and Child Care to address the First Nations’ request to allow each of their Chief and Council to appoint a school trustee.

Localized Representation

The current 'at large' electoral model can create disproportionate representation of communities on the Board of Education. The table below summarizes from which municipality or First Nation each candidate and each elected trustee have resided (based on home address disclosed in their nomination package) during the past three elections. It is possible that adopting a model with multiple electoral areas can allow for more localized and inclusive representation, as voter ballots would list only the candidates running in a particular electoral area, and thus there being a greater chance of familiarity of candidates amongst voters.

	2014		2018		2022	
	Elected	Total Candidates	Elected	Total Candidates	Elected	Total Candidates
Esquimalt Nation	-	-	-	-	-	1
Songhees Nation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Highlands	-	-	-	-	-	-
View Royal	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oak Bay	-	-	-	-	-	2
Esquimalt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saanich	1	1	1	2	-	4
Victoria	8	12	7	10	9	23
Other	-	-	1	-	-	-
TOTALS	9	13	9	12	9	30

Proven Model

There are 60 public school districts in British Columbia (including School District No. 93 (Conseil scolaire francophone de la C.-B.), of which 43 use an electoral model with multiple electoral areas. The remaining 16 school districts elect school trustees 'at large' and predominately serve only one municipality.

Both the neighbouring school districts to GVSD, Sooke School District (No. 62) and Saanich School District (No. 63), use a model with multiple electoral areas.

Population

The principle of voter parity (representation by population) based on the concept of “one person – one vote” was considered, which is why both Victoria and Saanich have been assigned two trustee seats as both the largest municipal portions that make up the school district both geographically and by population.

Nature of Public Discussion

Public Consultation

On August 5, 2025, in partnership with local First Nations and municipalities and the CRD, the GVSD launched public communications to inform the community of the proposed changes and of the opportunity to submit feedback through an online form and through an in-person engagement session.

Information about the proposed changes as well as an invitation to the public engagement session were sent to the Four Houses (the Esquimalt Nation, the Songhees Nation, the Métis Nation of Greater Victoria, and the Urban Peoples' House Indigenous Advisory), Educational Partners (CUPE 947, CUPE 382, Greater Victoria Teachers' Association, and the Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils), school Principals and Vice Principals, all GVSD staff, and all GVSD families. The same information was shared on the GVSD website and social media and was sent to local media to support with awareness.

Comments and questions that were received through the online form prior to the public engagement session were compiled and a Frequently Asked Questions document was created. The document was posted on the GVSD website on September 5, 2025, to align with a reminder of the public engagement session which was sent to all of the Rightsholders and stakeholders listed above who received the initial invitation. Copies of the document were also available at the public engagement session.

On September 9, 2025, the Task Force hosted a public engagement session from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at SJ Willis (923 Topaz Avenue). The session included a brief presentation of the proposal, relevant background information, and the purpose of the Task Force. The public was then invited to engage and ask questions of the Task Force, other GVSD staff, and other local representatives of each First Nation and municipality.

Much of the feedback gathered and the questions posed at the in-person session reflected those that we had already heard through the online form. The online form closed on September 11, 2025 and gathered 266 responses.

In summary, the majority of the feedback gathered was positive and reflected support for the proposed changes. A great number of respondents posed thoughtful questions and requested clarifications on specific voter experiences or situations that could arise with a change in electoral model, which we aimed to address through the previously mentioned FAQ document. A subset of the feedback offered alternative suggestions that were either previously considered during Task Force meetings or unachievable for the 2026 election based on existing legal frameworks outlined in the *School Act* and *Local Government Act*. Additionally, there was feedback collected that opposed the changes.

Timeline

2024

- October 9 – Township of Esquimalt sends letter to Board of Education inquiring about the consideration of multiple trustee electoral areas for the 2026 general school election
- October 22 – District of Highlands sends letter to Board of Education in support of the Township of Esquimalt’s letter send on October 9
- November 25 – Both the above-mentioned letters from the Township of Esquimalt and District of Highlands are included in the Regular Board Meeting agenda package, of which the minutes reflect a statement that the letters should be addressed to the Minister

2025

- March 19 – Township of Esquimalt sends letter to Official Trustee inquiring about the consideration of multiple trustee electoral areas for the 2026 general school election
- March 19 – Official Trustee mentions March 19 letter from Township of Esquimalt during standing Songhees Chief and Council meeting
- March 21 – April 28 – Letters supporting the Township of Esquimalt’s request to consider multiple trustee electoral areas are sent to the Ministry of Education and Child Care from the Town of View Royal, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, District of Oak Bay, and District of Highlands
- May 1-14 – Ministry of Education and Child Care notifies the above groups that the Official Trustee will be reaching out to all parties (the Task Force) to address the topic

- May 22 – Trustee electoral areas are discussed at Partners of SD61* meeting
- May 28 – Task Force Meeting #1
- June 12 – Official Trustee provides update Partners of SD61* meeting
- June 17 – Official Trustee meets with representatives from Songhees Nation
- June 20 – Official Trustee meets with Chief and Council of Esquimalt Nation
- July 2 – Task Force Meeting #2
- July 10 – Superintendent notifies school Principals and Vice-Principals and senior leaders in the District of Task Force meetings and future public announcements including an engagement session in September
- July 10 – Official Trustee sends letter to the District of Saanich for continued support for consideration of a variation to the existing electoral model
- July 22 – District of Saanich notifies the Official Trustee that a motion was passed to receive the July 10 letter from the Official Trustee
- July 22 – Task Force Meeting #3
- July 24 – Official Trustee attends Songhees Nation Community Engagement event
- August 5 – Public communications are launched about the proposed changes, invitations to public engagement are sent to Rightsholders and stakeholders, and the online form is promoted for feedback
- August 5 – Online feedback form opens
- August 27 – Indigenous Education Council (IEC) is informed of September 9 engagement session and is extended an invitation in-person
- September 2 – Task Force Meeting #4
- September 5 – Reminders of public engagement are sent to Rightsholders and stakeholders with updated GVSD website link containing FAQ document
- September 9 – In-person public engagement session is co-hosted by the Task Force from 7pm to 9pm at SJ Willis
- September 11 – Online feedback form closes
- September 11 – Official Trustee provides update Partners of SD61* meeting
- September 26 – GVSD submits proposal to Ministry of Education and Child Care

* The group includes representatives from The Four Houses, GVTA, CUPE 947, CUPE 382, VCPAC, District and School Leadership

Summary of Request

The GVSD formally submits this proposal and accompanying letter as a request that, pursuant to Section 30 (4) of the *School Act*, the Ministry consider making a variation order prior to the next general school election to be held on October 17, 2026.

As a continued commitment to this process and honoring UNDRIP, the GVSD on behalf of the Task Force call upon local government to continue working with First Nations and Rightsholders to support self-governance and explore the possibility of adjusting the *School Act* to allow for the appointment of trustees from First Nations communities.

Appendix A – Letters

2024_10_09_Township of Esquimalt to GVSD

2024_10_09_Appendix A_Election Systems for CRD School Districts

2024_10_09_Appendix B_List of BC School Districts with Trustee Electoral Areas

2024_10_22_Disitrct of Highlands to GVSD

2025_03_19_Township of Esquimalt to GVSD

2025_03_19_Appendix A_Election Systems for CRD School Districts

2025_03_19_Appendix B_List of BC School Districts with Trustee Electoral Areas

2025_03_19_Township of Esquimalt to MOECC

2025_03_19_Appendix A_Election Systems for CRD School Districts

2025_03_19_Appendix B_List of BC School Districts with Trustee Electoral Areas

2025_03_21_View Royal to MOECC

2025_03_31_Esquimalt Nation to MOECC

2025_04_01_Songhees Nation to MOECC

2025_04_07_District of Oak Bay to MOECC

2025_04_28_District of Highlands to MOECC

2025_05_01_MOECC to District of Oak Bay

2025_05_01_MOECC to Township of Esquimalt

2025_05_01_MOECC to Town of View Royal

2025_05_02_MOECC to Esquimalt Nation

2025_05_14_MOECC to District of Highlands

2025_07_10_GVSD to District of Saanich

2025_07_22_District of Saanich to GVSD

2025_09_10_Township of Esquimalt to GVSD



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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File No. 0550-11

October 9, 2024

Greater Victoria School District No. 61

Nicole Duncan, Board Chair, Greater Victoria School District No. 61
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

Via email to: nduncan@sd61.bc.ca

Dear Greater Victoria School District 61 Board of Education Chair Nicole Duncan and Trustees:

Re: Consideration of a Trustee Electoral Area election model

I am writing on behalf of the Township of Esquimalt Council to ask that the Greater Victoria School District 61 consider implementing a Trustee Electoral Area election model for the upcoming 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections.

Key components of the Township of Esquimalt's 2023-2026 Council Priorities involve good governance and organizational excellence as well as strong relationships and partnerships. It is in this spirit we make this request as it could provide improved local area representation.

In supporting these priorities, the Township of Esquimalt Council passed the following motion at our September 23, 2024 meeting:

"THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Esquimalt ask that the Greater Victoria School District 61 Board of Education consider a Trustee Electoral Area election model to be implemented in time for the 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township of Esquimalt author letters to the City of Victoria, District of Saanich, District of Oak Bay, Town of View Royal, District of Highlands, the Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation informing them of the Township's request to the Greater Victoria School District 61 Board of Education."



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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The vast majority of B.C. school districts that serve multiple municipalities, including three of the four school districts within the Capital Regional District, have already 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 communities. We support consultation and representation for First Nations Communities as well. In addition to achieving more geographically balanced representation, such a model would also help make school trustee elections more efficient for each administering municipality as well as improving access and reducing barriers for school trustee candidates while strengthening connectedness between local candidates and their community's voters.

The Township of Esquimalt recognizes and respects your Board of Education's autonomy in selecting the best representation model for electing school trustees within Greater Victoria School District 61.

As such, please give consideration of our request of your Board. If you are agreeable to consideration of our request, we anticipate and appreciate that your consideration will require consultation with each municipality and Indigenous community included within School District 61 as well as approval from the Ministry of Education. By giving this matter consideration now, you are enabled with sufficient time to implement a Trustee Electoral Area model for the 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections in the event that you ultimately opt to make this change for the school district in which we all share.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Desjardins".

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

Appendix A: Election Systems for CRD School Districts.

There are four school districts within the CRD which elect school board trustees as follows:

Greater Victoria School District #61:

- 9 trustee positions elected 100% At-Large.
- No local community/geographic representation guaranteed.

Sooke School District #62:

- 7 trustee positions elected separately from two Trustee Electoral Areas:

Trustee Electoral Areas	Number of Trustees
Belmont Zone – Langford, Colwood, Metchosin, and a portion of Highlands	Four
Milnes Landing Zone - Sooke, Port Renfrew	Three
TOTAL	Seven

Saanich School District #63:

- 7 trustee positions elected separately from four Trustee Electoral Areas:

Trustee Electoral Areas	Number of Trustees
District of North Saanich	Two
Town of Sidney	One
District of Central Saanich	Two
Partial District of Saanich	Two
TOTAL	Seven

Gulf Islands School District #64:

- 7 trustee positions elected separately from five Trustee Electoral Areas:

Trustee Electoral Areas	Number of Trustees
Salt Spring Island	Three
Galiano Island	One
Pender Islands	One
Saturna Island	One
Mayne Island	One
TOTAL	Seven

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

In B.C., there are 60 public school districts of which 44 serve multiple municipalities with representation elected proportionally by community with the Trustee Electoral Area model. The remaining 16 school districts predominately serve only one municipality and, therefore, appropriately elect school trustees at-large within their single municipality (e.g. Vancouver District 39, Burnaby District 41, Richmond District 38, etc.).

In contrast to School District 61, almost all other B.C. school districts that serve more than one municipality have implemented an equitable election by the Trustee Electoral Area system including as follows:

SCHOOL DISTRICT	Separated Trustee Electoral Areas for Electing School Trustees
District 5 - Southeast Kootenay	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cranbrook • District of Sparwood • City of Fernie • District of Elkford • Regional District of East Kootenay Rural Area
District 6 - Rocky Mountain	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kimberley • Town of Golden • District of Invermere • Village of Canal Flats • Village of Radium Hot Springs
District 8 - Kootenay Lake	<u>Six Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Nelson • Town of Creston • Salmo, Taghum & Blewett • Village of Kaslo & North Rural Zone • Slocan Valley / Bonnington • South Rural Zone
District 10 - Arrow Lakes	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 4 separated geographic zones
District 20 – Kootenay Columbia	<u>Six Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 6 separated geographic zones
District 22 - Vernon	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Vernon • District of Coldstream

District 23 - Central Okanagan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Lumby <p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kelowna • City of West Kelowna • District of Lake Country • District of Peachland
District 27 – Cariboo Chilcotin	<p><u>Seven Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 7 separated geographic zones
District 35 - Langley	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township of Langley • City of Langley
District 36 - Surrey	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Surrey • City of White Rock
District 42 - Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Maple Ridge • City of Pitt Meadows
District 43 - Coquitlam	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Coquitlam • City of Port Coquitlam • City of Port Moody • Villages of Anmore and Belcarra
District 44 – North Vancouver	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of North Vancouver • City of North Vancouver
District 46 - Sunshine Coast	<p><u>Three Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Sunshine Coast • Central Sunshine Coast • Lower Sunshine Coast
District 48 - Sea to Sky	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Squamish • Resort Municipality of Whistler • Village of Pemberton • Regional District Area C • Regional District Area D
District 49 - Central Coast	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 2 separated geographic zones
District 50 - Haida Gwaii	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 5 separated geographic zones

District 51 - Boundary	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Grand Forks • Christina Lake • Kettle Valley East • Kettle Valley North • Kettle Valley West
District 52 - Prince Rupert	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Surrey • City of White Rock
District 53 - Okanagan Similkameen	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Osoyoos • Town of Oliver • Village of Keremeos • Okanagan Falls
District 54 - Bulkley Valley	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Smithers • Town of Houston • Village of Telkwa • Lake Kathlyn/ Evelyn/ Moricetown
District 57 - Prince George	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Prince George • District of Mackenzie • Robson Valley
District 58 – Nicola Similkameen	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Merritt • Town of Princeton
District 59 - Peace River South	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Dawson Creek • District of Chetwynd • District of Tumbler Ridge • Pouce Coupe & Rural Areas
District 60 - Peace River North	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 5 separated geographic zones
District 62 - Sooke	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belmont Zone • Milnes Landing Zone
District 63 - Saanich	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial District of Saanich • Town of Sidney • District of Central Saanich • District of North Saanich

District 64 - Gulf Islands	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt Spring Island • Galiano Island • Pender Islands • Saturna Island • Mayne Island
District 67 - Okanagan Skaha	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Penticton • District of Summerland • Rural Zone Area
District 69 - Qualicum	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 4 separated geographic zones
District 70 - Pacific Rim	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberni Valley • West Coast
District 71 - Comox Valley	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Courtenay • Town of Comox • Village of Cumberland • Area A • Area C
District 72 - Campbell River	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Campbell River • Quadra • Sayward Valley
District 73 - Kamloops/Thompson	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kamloops • District of Barriere • District of Logan Lake • District of Clear Water • Village of Chase/Sun Peaks
District 74 - Gold Trail	<u>Seven Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 7 separated geographic zones
District 75 - Mission	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Mission • Fraser Valley Regional District
District 78 - Fraser/Cascade	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 3 separated geographic zones
District 82 - Coast Mountains	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Terrace • City of Kitimat • District of Stewart • Village of Hazelton • Thornhill Community
District 83 - North Okanagan/Shuswap	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Salmon Arm • City of Armstrong/ District of Spallumchen • City of Enderby/ District of Sicamous • Rural Zone Area
District 84 - Vancouver Island West	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Zeballos • Village of Gold River • Village of Tahsis • Kyuquot Community
District 85 - Vancouver Island North	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 3 separated geographic zones
District 87 - Stikine	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Atlin • Dease Lake • Iskut • Lower Post • Telegraph Creek
District 91 - Nechako Lakes	<u>Six Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Vanderhoof • District of Fort St. James • Village of Burns Lake • Village of Fraser Lake • Village of Granisle • Grassy Plains/Francois Lake
District 92 - Nisga'a	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laxgaltsap • Gitlaxtaamiks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gitwinksihlkw• Gingolx• Nass Camp
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File: 0400.60

October 22, 2024

Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Nicole Duncan, Board Chair
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria BC V8Z 1E8

Email: nduncan@sd61.bc.ca

Dear Nicole Duncan:

Re: Consideration of a Trustee Electoral Area Election Model

At a meeting held October 21, 2024, District of Highlands Council passed the following resolution:

"That a letter be sent to the Greater Victoria School District No. 61 supporting the Township of Esquimalt's request of the implementation of a Trustee Electoral Area election model for the upcoming 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections."

If you require any additional information, please contact me by email at airving@highlands.ca or by telephone at 250-474-1773.

Sincerely,

Amanda Irving
Corporate Officer

cc: Township of Esquimalt



1980 Millstream Road, Victoria, B C V9B 6H1

Tel: (250) 474-1773 Fax: (250) 474-3677 Web: www.highlands.ca



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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Website: www.esquimalt.ca Email: info@esquimalt.ca

Telephone (250) 414-7100
Fax (250) 414-7111

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Desjardins".

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

Appendix A: Election Systems for CRD School Districts.

There are four school districts within the CRD which elect school board trustees as follows:

Greater Victoria School District #61:

- 9 trustee positions elected 100% At-Large.
- No local community/geographic representation guaranteed.

Sooke School District #62:

- 7 trustee positions elected separately from two Trustee Electoral Areas:

Trustee Electoral Areas	Number of Trustees
Belmont Zone – Langford, Colwood, Metchosin and a portion of Highlands	Four
Milnes Landing Zone - Sooke, Port Renfrew	Three
TOTAL	Seven

Saanich School District #63:

- 7 trustee positions elected separately from four Trustee Electoral Areas:

Trustee Electoral Areas	Number of Trustees
District of North Saanich	Two
Town of Sidney	One
District of Central Saanich	Two
Partial District of Saanich	Two
TOTAL	Seven

Gulf Islands School District #64:

- 7 trustee positions elected separately from five Trustee Electoral Areas:

Trustee Electoral Areas	Number of Trustees
Salt Spring Island	Three
Galiano Island	One
Pender Islands	One
Saturna Island	One
Mayne Island	One
TOTAL	Seven

Appendix B: List of BC School Districts that Elect Trustees Equitably By Community/Trustee Electoral Areas:

In B.C., there are 60 public school districts of which 44 serve multiple municipalities with representation elected equitably by community with the Trustee Electoral Area model. The remaining 16 school districts predominately serve only one municipality and, therefore, appropriately elect school trustees at-large within their single municipality (e.g. Vancouver District 39, Burnaby District 41, Richmond District 38, etc.).

In contrast to School District 61, almost all other B.C. school districts that serve more than one municipality have implemented an equitable election by the Trustee Electoral Area system including as follows:

SCHOOL DISTRICT	Equitable Separated Trustee Electoral Areas for Electing School Trustees
District 5 - Southeast Kootenay	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cranbrook • District of Sparwood • City of Fernie • District of Elkford • Regional District of East Kootenay Rural Area
District 6 - Rocky Mountain	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kimberley • Town of Golden • District of Invermere • Village of Canal Flats • Village of Radium Hot Springs
District 8 - Kootenay Lake	<u>Six Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Nelson • Town of Creston • Salmo, Taghum & Blewett • Village of Kaslo & North Rural Zone • Slocan Valley / Bonnington • South Rural Zone
District 10 - Arrow Lakes	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 4 separated geographic zones
District 20 – Kootenay Columbia	<u>Six Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 6 separated geographic zones

District 22 - Vernon	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Vernon • District of Coldstream • Village of Lumby
District 23 - Central Okanagan	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kelowna • City of West Kelowna • District of Lake Country • District of Peachland
District 27 – Cariboo Chilcotin	<u>Seven Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 7 separated geographic zones
District 35 - Langley	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township of Langley • City of Langley
District 36 - Surrey	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Surrey • City of White Rock
District 42 - Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Maple Ridge • City of Pitt Meadows
District 43 - Coquitlam	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Coquitlam • City of Port Coquitlam • City of Port Moody • Villages of Anmore and Belcarra
District 44 – North Vancouver	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of North Vancouver • City of North Vancouver
District 46 - Sunshine Coast	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Sunshine Coast • Central Sunshine Coast • Lower Sunshine Coast
District 48 - Sea to Sky	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Squamish • Resort Municipality of Whistler • Village of Pemberton • Regional District Area C • Regional District Area D

District 49 - Central Coast	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 2 separated geographic zones
District 50 - Haida Gwaii	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 5 separated geographic zones
District 51 - Boundary	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Grand Forks • Christina Lake • Kettle Valley East • Kettle Valley North • Kettle Valley West
District 52 - Prince Rupert	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Prince Rupert • Village of Port Edward / Rural
District 53 - Okanagan Similkameen	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Osoyoos • Town of Oliver • Village of Keremeos • Okanagan Falls
District 54 - Bulkley Valley	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Smithers • Town of Houston • Village of Telkwa • Lake Kathlyn/ Evelyn/ Moricetown
District 57 - Prince George	<p><u>Three Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Prince George • District of Mackenzie • Robson Valley
District 58 – Nicola Similkameen	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Merritt • Town of Princeton
District 59 - Peace River South	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Dawson Creek • District of Chetwynd • District of Tumbler Ridge • Pouce Coupe & Rural Areas

District 60 - Peace River North	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 5 separated geographic zones
District 62 - Sooke	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belmont Zone • Milnes Landing Zone
District 63 - Saanich	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial District of Saanich • Town of Sidney • District of Central Saanich • District of North Saanich
District 64 - Gulf Islands	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt Spring Island • Galiano Island • Pender Islands • Saturna Island • Mayne Island
District 67 - Okanagan Skaha	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Penticton • District of Summerland • Rural Zone Area
District 69 - Qualicum	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 4 separated geographic zones
District 70 - Pacific Rim	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberni Valley • West Coast
District 71 - Comox Valley	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Courtenay • Town of Comox • Village of Cumberland • Area A • Area C
District 72 - Campbell River	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Campbell River • Quadra • Sayward Valley

District 73 - Kamloops/Thompson	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kamloops • District of Barriere • District of Logan Lake • District of Clear Water • Village of Chase/Sun Peaks
District 74 - Gold Trail	<u>Seven Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 7 separated geographic zones
District 75 - Mission	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Mission • Fraser Valley Regional District
District 78 - Fraser/Cascade	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 3 separated geographic zones
District 82 - Coast Mountains	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Terrace • City of Kitimat • District of Stewart • Village of Hazelton • Thornhill Community
District 83 - North Okanagan/Shuswap	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Salmon Arm • City of Armstrong/ District of Spallumchen • City of Enderby/ District of Sicamous • Rural Zone Area
District 84 - Vancouver Island West	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Zeballos • Village of Gold River • Village of Tahsis • Kyuquot Community
District 85 - Vancouver Island North	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 3 separated geographic zones

District 87 - Stikine	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Atlin • Dease Lake • Iskut • Lower Post • Telegraph Creek
District 91 - Nechako Lakes	<p><u>Six Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Vanderhoof • District of Fort St. James • Village of Burns Lake • Village of Fraser Lake • Village of Granisle • Grassy Plains/Francois Lake
District 92 - Nisga'a	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laxgaltsap • Gitlaxtaamiks • Gitwinksihlkw • Gingolx • Nass Camp



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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File No. 0550-11

March 19, 2025

Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Via email to: ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Beare:

Re: Trustee Electoral Area election model

As per Part 4 – Division 1 – Section 30 of the B.C. School Act, the Township of Esquimalt understands that you are granted the authority to allow for a Trustee Electoral Area election model for electing school board trustees. Many British Columbia school districts that serve multiple municipalities have already 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.

With regards to Greater Victoria School District No. 61 (SD 61) which includes the Township of Esquimalt, five other municipalities and two First Nations, there is no Trustee Electoral Area election model in place. Instead, SD 61 school trustees are elected at-large, which we have found to be an inequitable and problematic form of representation.

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,



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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.

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."

For your consideration, the Township of Esquimalt believes that a SD 61 led task force, which is inclusive and collaborative of all the communities that SD 61 serves, would be the best way to explore, identify, and create a proposed list of designated SD 61 Trustee Electoral Area geographic zones and boundaries. These recommendations would then be submitted to the Minister for final review and a decision on a SD 61 Trustee Electoral Area election model that could be implemented in time for the 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections.

At your direction, the Township of Esquimalt looks forward to an opportunity to work with SD 61 and all communities within SD 61 on the important matter of school board representation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Desjardins".

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

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District of Central Saanich	Two
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Gulf Islands School District #64:

- 7 trustee positions elected separately from five Trustee Electoral Areas:

Trustee Electoral Areas	Number of Trustees
Salt Spring Island	Three
Galiano Island	One
Pender Islands	One
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Mayne Island	One
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In B.C., there are 60 public school districts of which 44 serve multiple municipalities with representation elected equitably by community with the Trustee Electoral Area model. The remaining 16 school districts predominately serve only one municipality and, therefore, appropriately elect school trustees at-large within their single municipality (e.g. Vancouver District 39, Burnaby District 41, Richmond District 38, etc.).

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District 35 - Langley	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township of Langley • City of Langley
District 36 - Surrey	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Surrey • City of White Rock
District 42 - Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Maple Ridge • City of Pitt Meadows
District 43 - Coquitlam	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Coquitlam • City of Port Coquitlam • City of Port Moody • Villages of Anmore and Belcarra
District 44 – North Vancouver	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of North Vancouver • City of North Vancouver
District 46 - Sunshine Coast	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Sunshine Coast • Central Sunshine Coast • Lower Sunshine Coast
District 48 - Sea to Sky	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Squamish • Resort Municipality of Whistler • Village of Pemberton • Regional District Area C • Regional District Area D

District 49 - Central Coast	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 2 separated geographic zones
District 50 - Haida Gwaii	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 5 separated geographic zones
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District 53 - Okanagan Similkameen	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Osoyoos • Town of Oliver • Village of Keremeos • Okanagan Falls
District 54 - Bulkley Valley	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Smithers • Town of Houston • Village of Telkwa • Lake Kathlyn/ Evelyn/ Moricetown
District 57 - Prince George	<p><u>Three Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Prince George • District of Mackenzie • Robson Valley
District 58 – Nicola Similkameen	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Merritt • Town of Princeton
District 59 - Peace River South	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Dawson Creek • District of Chetwynd • District of Tumbler Ridge • Pouce Coupe & Rural Areas

District 60 - Peace River North	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 5 separated geographic zones
District 62 - Sooke	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belmont Zone • Milnes Landing Zone
District 63 - Saanich	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial District of Saanich • Town of Sidney • District of Central Saanich • District of North Saanich
District 64 - Gulf Islands	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt Spring Island • Galiano Island • Pender Islands • Saturna Island • Mayne Island
District 67 - Okanagan Skaha	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Penticton • District of Summerland • Rural Zone Area
District 69 - Qualicum	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 4 separated geographic zones
District 70 - Pacific Rim	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberni Valley • West Coast
District 71 - Comox Valley	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Courtenay • Town of Comox • Village of Cumberland • Area A • Area C
District 72 - Campbell River	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Campbell River • Quadra • Sayward Valley

District 73 - Kamloops/Thompson	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kamloops • District of Barriere • District of Logan Lake • District of Clear Water • Village of Chase/Sun Peaks
District 74 - Gold Trail	<u>Seven Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 7 separated geographic zones
District 75 - Mission	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Mission • Fraser Valley Regional District
District 78 - Fraser/Cascade	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 3 separated geographic zones
District 82 - Coast Mountains	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Terrace • City of Kitimat • District of Stewart • Village of Hazelton • Thornhill Community
District 83 - North Okanagan/Shuswap	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Salmon Arm • City of Armstrong/ District of Spallumchen • City of Enderby/ District of Sicamous • Rural Zone Area
District 84 - Vancouver Island West	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Zeballos • Village of Gold River • Village of Tahsis • Kyuquot Community
District 85 - Vancouver Island North	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system with trustees elected by 3 separated geographic zones

District 87 - Stikine	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Atlin • Dease Lake • Iskut • Lower Post • Telegraph Creek
District 91 - Nechako Lakes	<p><u>Six Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Vanderhoof • District of Fort St. James • Village of Burns Lake • Village of Fraser Lake • Village of Granisle • Grassy Plains/Francois Lake
District 92 - Nisga'a	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laxgaltsap • Gitlaxtaamiks • Gitwinksihlkw • Gingolx • Nass Camp



TOWN OF VIEW ROYAL

45 View Royal Avenue, Victoria, BC, Canada V9B 1A6
Ph. 250-479-6800 • Fx. 250-727-9551 • E. info@viewroyal.ca • www.viewroyal.ca

March 21, 2025

Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Via Email: ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Beare,

Re: Support for a Trustee Electoral Area Election Model for SD 61

On behalf of Council, the Town of View Royal wishes to express its strong support for the Township of Esquimalt's request for the Ministry of Education and Child Care to consider and approve the implementation of a Trustee Electoral Area election model for School District 61 (Greater Victoria).

We believe that equitable and localized representation is foundational to effective and accountable school governance. The current at-large system fails to adequately reflect the distinct voices and educational priorities of the many unique communities within SD 61, including municipalities such as View Royal, as well as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.

In support of this effort, the Town of View Royal urges the Ministry to direct the establishment of an inclusive and collaborative task force—led by SD 61 and including representation from all six member municipalities, as well as the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations. Their inclusion is vital to ensuring that Indigenous perspectives are fully recognized and embedded in the governance of our public education system.

A Trustee Electoral Area model that is fair, geographically representative, and reflective of the diversity of communities in SD 61 will strengthen our shared commitment to equity, reconciliation, and good governance. We respectfully ask that the Ministry consider this change in advance of the 2026 Local Government and School Board Elections.

Sincerely,

Sid Tobias, MSM, CD, MA
Mayor

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
Esquimalt Nation
Township of Esquimalt
District of Highlands
District of Oak Bay
District of Saanich
Songhees Nation
City of Victoria



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.

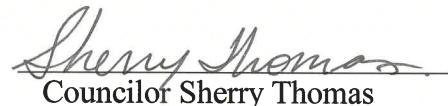
We are open and eager to engage with the Ministry, the school district, and other partners to co-develop a path forward that ensures equity, accountability, and Indigenous self-determination in public education.

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



Songhees Nation

1100 Admirals Road
Victoria, BC
V9A 2P6

April 1, 2025

RE: Support for Electoral Area Representation in School Board Elections

Dear Honourable Minister Beare, Minister of Education and Child Care:

On behalf of Chief and Council of Songhees Nation, I am writing to voice our support for the adoption of an electoral area model for school trustee elections within our region. Additionally, we would like to emphasize the necessity for the appointment of designated seats on the Board of Education for the two Local Nations on whose territories the Greater Victoria School District resides.

The current electoral model creates disproportionate representation of communities on the school board. An electoral area model would ensure that school trustees are elected from specific areas within the district, allowing for more localized representation and fostering greater accountability to the communities they serve. It will also provide a platform for Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to have our voices more directly heard in educational matters that impact our children, our families, and our culture.

The Province of BC has committed to implementing the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) Action Plan. The inclusion of representatives from Indigenous communities in important education related decisions that affect our communities is a step towards reconciliation. Ensuring that there is fair and equal representation on the school board is vital in addressing the unique needs and perspectives of our students.

As a community deeply invested in the education and well-being of our children, we believe that this model will create a more inclusive and equitable process for all families and communities within the district. We believe that the implementation of this model will enhance collaboration between the school district and Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, promoting an educational environment that values and respects Indigenous cultures and perspectives. It is our hope that the Ministry of Education and Child Care will support the transition to an electoral area model, as well as the designation of Indigenous representation on school boards. By adopting this model, we can help bridge the gap between the public education system and Indigenous communities, fostering mutual understanding, respect, and a stronger partnership in shaping the educational experiences of all students.

We stand ready to support this important step toward creating a more inclusive and representative educational system for all and ensuring that the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples are upheld in the education system.

We appreciate your consideration and your ongoing commitment to improving education for our students. We look forward to working together towards further strengthening our relationship in the spirit of trust and reconciliation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chief Ron Sam".

Chief Ron Sam
Songhees Nation

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
Esquimalt Nation
City of Victoria



THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF OAK BAY
MUNICIPAL HALL – 2167 OAK BAY AVENUE – VICTORIA, BC V8R 1G2
PHONE 250-598-3311 FAX 250-598-9108 WEBSITE www.oakbay.ca

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Via email: ecc.minister@gov.bc.ca

April 7, 2025

Honourable Lisa Beare
Ministry of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt,
Victoria, BC V8W9E2

Dear Minister Beare:

Re: Support for a Trustee Electoral Area Election Model for School District 61

At the Oak Bay Council meeting held March 24, 2025, Council received correspondence from the Township of Esquimalt dated March 19, 2025 and resolved: “*THAT the Mayor draft a letter to the Province in support of Esquimalt’s request to explore Trustee Electoral Area options for School District 61.*”

On behalf of Council, I would like to express our support for the Township of Esquimalt’s request that the Ministry of Education and Child Care consider the implementation of a Trustee Electoral Area election model for School District 61, following comprehensive consultation with the communities served by the School District. The District of Oak Bay believes that an inclusive and collaborative task force would ensure that a proposed model reflects the diverse needs and perspectives of those it serves.

We respectfully request that the Ministry consider this task force and any proposed changes in advance of the 2026 Local Government and School Board Elections, ensuring sufficient time for consultation and planning. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your response and to the opportunity to collaborate on this important initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Murdoch, Mayor
District of Oak Bay

c. *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

Esquimalt Nation
Songhees Nation
Township of Esquimalt
Town of View Royal
City of Victoria
District of Saanich



File: 0400.60

April 28, 2025

Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Via Email: ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Beare:

Re: School District 61 School Board Electoral Area Reform and Election Model

At the April 7, 2025 District of Highlands Council meeting, Council expressed support for the Township of Esquimalt's request for the Minister of Education and Child Care to consider and approve the creation of an inclusive and collaborative task force to evaluate a Trustees Electoral Area election model for the Minister's consideration for approval and implementation in time for the 2026 Local Government and Board of Education elections.

If you require any additional information, please contact me by email at airving@highlands.ca or by telephone at 250-474-1773.

Sincerely,

Amanda Irving
Corporate Officer

cc: Township of Esquimalt



1980 Millstream Road Victoria B C V9B 6H1

Tel: 250-474-1773 Fax: 250-474-3677 Web: www.highlands.ca

Board of Education

Greater Victoria School District No. 61
556 Boleskine Road, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8
Phone (250) 475-4162 Fax (250) 475-4112



July 10, 2025

Dean Murdock, Mayor
District of Saanich
Email: c/o mayor@saanich.ca

RE: Continued Support Requested for Consideration of Variations to Trustee Electoral Areas in the Greater Victoria School District

Dear Mayor Murdock,

The Greater Victoria School District acknowledges receipt and thanks you for your letter of support to consider trustee electoral area representation in school board elections.

Please accept this letter as a follow-up to provide further support as you continue discussions at upcoming council meetings.

Please ensure that the proposed variations remain in confidence prior to early August at which time we will communicate the changes to the wider community and invite their feedback through public consultation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherri Bell".

Sherri Bell
Official Trustee, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District



The Corporation of the District of Saanich | Mayor's Office
770 Vernon Avenue Victoria BC V8X 2W7 | T 250-475-5510 | www.saanich.ca

July 22, 2025

Sherri Bell
Official Trustee, Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District

Email: sbell@sd61.bc.ca

Dear: Sherri Bell

RE: CONSIDERATION OF A TRUSTEE ELECTORAL AREA ELECTION MODEL

On July 21st, 2025, at its In Camera meeting, Saanich Council received an update on recent activities related to the trustee electoral model from Councillor Phelps Bondaroff. Following the update, Council passed the following motion:

That Saanich Council receive the July 10, 2025 letter from the Official Trustee, School District #61 for receipt.

While Council did not provide further comment, I wish to convey our appreciation for your efforts as you embark on consultation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Murdock".

Dean Murdock
Mayor



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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

Telephone (250) 414-7100
Fax (250) 414-7111

File No. 0550-11

September 10, 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 Areas Public Engagement

Please be advised that at its Regular Meeting of Council held on September 8, 2025, the Corporation of the Township of Esquimalt Council approved the following resolution:

“That Council supports the proposed trustee electoral area model for School District No. 61.”

Should you have any further questions at this time, please contact me at deb.hopkins@esquimalt.ca or 250-414-7135.

Sincerely,

Deb Hopkins
Director of Corporate Services/Corporate Officer