

May 14, 2021

Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, Board Chair  
Greater Victoria School District No.61  
556 Boleskine Road  
Victoria, B.C V8Z 1E8

Dear Superintendent of Schools Shelley Green, Secretary-Treasurer Kim Morris, Board Chair Jordan Watters

**RE: Student Representative Group and Music Budget Cut Proposal Concerns**

We are a group of senior students from across the Greater Victoria School District #61 representing our corresponding high schools. Responsibilities of this group include attending monthly meetings hosted by the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer alongside trustees by invitation. Additionally, we would participate in board meetings and working committees to share the thoughts, concerns and ideas of our school's student body. We found these opportunities extremely important, as they allowed us a chance to speak with the trustees and senior district staff collectively. However, after a public meeting was ended due to trustee misconduct, we have since been asked to no longer attend these meetings.

Over this past year, we have been reminded on numerous occasions about the importance of hearing student voices. Specifically, when we participated in board meetings, it was again mentioned that the school board and trustees wanted to hear our perspectives. They presented this in a welcoming and understanding manner by further providing contact information to continue discussions or establish connections. Unfortunately, after recent student representative meetings our encounters with the school board office staff have been disheartening. We feel as though our voices no longer matter, and limitations were placed on students being heard. In contrast to this, we have had several trustees reach out for collaboration on student-led initiatives. This has meant a lot to us as it shows proper leadership and advocating on our behalf.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight our time in the SD61 Music Program. We've had the privilege of being a part of numerous ensembles ranging from choirs, bands and strings for the past seven years of education, beginning in grade five. From these non-academic classes we have formed connections, grown our self confidence and explored unique opportunities. Throughout our careers as students in SD #61, music has been an area where we felt we could excel in and, more importantly, was a safe place free of judgement. As grade 12 students, we have had the opportunity to reflect on this incredible program and we cannot imagine our education without it. We are urging the board of education to seek alternatives with the current proposed budget cuts. Future students deserve the same mentorship, support, and opportunities we've received from these irreplaceable music programs.

Yours sincerely,

Lassah Johnson  
Student Representative, Esquimalt High School

Annika Clark  
Student Representative, Victoria High School

Felix Jensen  
Student Representative, Victoria High School

Brin Nyvall  
Student Representative, Spectrum Community School

Maxwell Mingo  
Student Representative, Mount Doug Community School

Gillian Clark  
Student Representative, Lambrick Park Secondary School