



April 21, 2023

Board of Education
School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria BC V8Z 1E8

Dear Greater Victoria School District 61 Trustees,

Re: Victoria Principals' and Vice Principals' Association Letter in support of Greater Victoria School District 61 Police Liaison Program

The Victoria Principals' and Vice Principals' Association wishes to express our support for the continuation of the Greater Victoria School District's School Liaison Program.

As administrators in SD61, Principals and Vice Principals are focused on supporting our students. Our roles and support stretch beyond the classroom. We work with many provincial, municipal and local community members, agencies, unions and nations in a shared goal of nurturing student learning and their wellbeing in a safe, responsive and inclusive learning environment. These partnerships and working relationships reflect our district's values of engagement, equity, innovation, positive change, integrity, openness, transparency, respect, social responsibility and justice. Over the years the program has been in effect, the school liaison officers have proven to play an important role in achieving our goals. Our relationships with our local police departments reflect our shared values.

Administrators have seen the benefits of this program in the positive relationships that School Liaison Officers (SLO) foster with students, beginning in elementary school and through middle and secondary schools. School liaison officers are present in schools for assemblies, to answer questions from students, to visit classes and to consult by request with administrators, teachers, students and families about a variety of issues. Our SLO community

partners' approach to this work is trauma-informed and demonstrates both professionalism and sensitivity. These important and deliberate connections build relationships with students, families and community through positive interactions.

There are also times when schools need the assistance and expertise of police officers. In those high stress times, the familiar face of a trauma-informed trained school liaison officer can decrease anxiety for students. SLOs know our students, our buildings, and our unique circumstances. We reach out to our SLOs to work together to support students who are struggling in school or community. Our district works collaboratively with SLOs and other agencies to identify students who need additional supports and can continue that support after school hours as appropriate.

The VPVPA acknowledges the important work that schools need to do with our IBPOC and marginalized students and the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We feel this important work is best done in partnership with the institutions, who like schools, have historically created and upheld unjust systems. Removing our school liaison officers from schools does not help to decolonize our systems; rather it maintains and reinforces stereotypes and barriers towards Truth and Reconciliation.

The Victoria Principals' and Vice Principals' Association strongly wishes to work towards decolonization and demarginalization within our schools and with our partners. We feel we are better together, and together we can make these necessary improvements. Each partner's voice is essential and we look forward to continuing this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brenna O'Connor".

Brenna O'Connor

VPVPA President

On behalf the Victoria Principals' and Vice Principals' Association