

## **DRAFT LETTER**

**Dear the Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Education and Child Care,**

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. As you are aware, the vast majority of 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 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.

As such, I am pleased to share with you that at our Council meeting of [insert date], the Township of Esquimalt passed the following resolution:

**“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** 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:** 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 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 School District 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, that would then be submitted to you for your final review and decision as to whether or not a SD 61 Trustee Electoral Area election model can 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 School District 61 and all communities within SD 61 on the important matter of school board representation.

Sincerely,

**Mayor Barb Desjardins,  
Township of Esquimalt**

*Encl:*

**Appendix A:** Election Systems for CRD School Districts,

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

## **DRAFT LETTER**

**Dear Official Trustee Sherri Bell, Greater Victoria School District No. 61**

The Township of Esquimalt wishes to congratulate you on your recent appointment as the Official Trustee for the Greater Victoria School District No. 61.

As part of your mandate to restore good governance, strong relationships and partnerships for the Greater Victoria School District 61 Board of Education, 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. As such, I would like to share with you that at our Council meeting of [insert date], the Township of Esquimalt passed the following resolution:

**“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** 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:** 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 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.”

As per 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. Across British Columbia, the vast majority of 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.

The Township of Esquimalt believes that a School District 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 for the Minister’s consideration to be implemented in time for the 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections.

We thank you for your service and we look forward to an opportunity to work with you on the important matter of school board representation. As such, please give consideration to supporting our request of the Minister. We anticipate and appreciate that your consideration will require consultation with each municipality and Indigenous community included within School District 61. By giving this matter consideration now, we 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 the Minister opts to make this positive change for the school district in which we all share.

**Mayor Barb Desjardins,  
Township of Esquimalt**

*Encl: **Appendix A:** Election Systems for CRD School Districts, **Appendix B:** List of BC School Districts that Elect Trustees Equitably By Community/Trustee Electoral Areas*

## **DRAFT LETTER**

**Dear: Darlene Rotchford, MLA for Esquimalt-Colwood  
Diana Gibson, MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head  
Lana Popham, MLA for Saanich South  
Grace Lore, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill  
Nina Krieger, MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake**

As you are Members of the Legislative Assembly jointly representing the Greater Victoria School District No. 61, the Township of Esquimalt wishes to share with you that at our Council meeting of **[insert date]**, the Township of Esquimalt passed the following resolution:

**“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** 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:** 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 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.”

As per 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. Across British Columbia, the vast majority of 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.

More commonly referred to as a ward system, Trustee Electoral Areas help ensure that no matter where one lives or whichever family of schools one belongs to, they will have a much better chance of guaranteed representation elected from their community by their community and for their community. Under the current SD 61 election model, by contrast, the Township of Esquimalt has not had a resident serving on the school board since the 1990s.

The Township of Esquimalt believes that a School District 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 for the Minister’s consideration to be implemented in time for the 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections.

**Mayor Barb Desjardins,  
Township of Esquimalt**

*Encl:*

**Appendix A:** Election Systems for CRD School Districts

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

## **DRAFT LETTER**

**Dear [insert Municipality/ First Nation]**

Further to the Township's letter to you dated [insert date] regarding our request of the Greater Victoria School District No. 61 Board of Education to give consideration of a new Trustee Electoral Area election model in place of at-large elections for school board trustees, I am writing to provide you an update.

At the November 25, 2024, School District 61 School Board meeting, the Township of Esquimalt's letter was placed on the board's agenda. There was very little discussion among the now terminated board other than to suggest that our request instead be sent to the Minister of Education and Child Care for her consideration.

In response, I am informing you that at our Council meeting of [insert date], the Township of Esquimalt passed the following resolution:

***“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:*** 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:*** 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 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.”

As per 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. Across British Columbia, the vast majority of 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.

The Township of Esquimalt believes that a School District 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 for the Minister's consideration to be implemented in time for the 2026 Local Government/Board of Education elections.

We ask that your council consider joining us in making the same request to the Minister of Education and Child Care to consider implementing a Trustee Electoral Area model based on consultation with all our communities for the school district in which we all share.

**Mayor Barb Desjardins,  
Township of Esquimalt**

***Encl: Appendix A:*** Election Systems for CRD School Districts ***Appendix B:*** List of BC School Districts that Elect Trustees Equitably 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:

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

Saanich School District #63:

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

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

Gulf Islands School District #64:

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

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

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

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward system with trustees elected by 2 separated geographic zones</li> </ul>
District 50 - Haida Gwaii	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward system with trustees elected by 5 separated geographic zones</li> </ul>
District 51 - Boundary	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Grand Forks</li> <li>• Christina Lake</li> <li>• Kettle Valley East</li> <li>• Kettle Valley North</li> <li>• Kettle Valley West</li> </ul>
District 52 - Prince Rupert	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Prince Rupert</li> <li>• Village of Port Edward / Rural</li> </ul>
District 53 - Okanagan Similkameen	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Osoyoos</li> <li>• Town of Oliver</li> <li>• Village of Keremeos</li> <li>• Okanagan Falls</li> </ul>
District 54 - Bulkley Valley	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Smithers</li> <li>• Town of Houston</li> <li>• Village of Telkwa</li> <li>• Lake Kathlyn/ Evelyn/ Moricetown</li> </ul>
District 57 - Prince George	<p><u>Three Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Prince George</li> <li>• District of Mackenzie</li> <li>• Robson Valley</li> </ul>
District 58 – Nicola Similkameen	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Merritt</li> <li>• Town of Princeton</li> </ul>
District 59 - Peace River South	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Dawson Creek</li> <li>• District of Chetwynd</li> <li>• District of Tumbler Ridge</li> <li>• Pouce Coupe &amp; Rural Areas</li> </ul>
District 60 - Peace River North	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward system with trustees elected by 5 separated geographic zones</li> </ul>
District 62 - Sooke	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belmont Zone</li> <li>• Milnes Landing Zone</li> </ul>
District 63 - Saanich	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partial District of Saanich</li> <li>• Town of Sidney</li> <li>• District of Central Saanich</li> <li>• District of North Saanich</li> </ul>
District 64 - Gulf Islands	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salt Spring Island</li> <li>• Galiano Island</li> <li>• Pender Islands</li> <li>• Saturna Island</li> <li>• Mayne Island</li> </ul>
District 67 - Okanagan Skaha	<p><u>Three Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Penticton</li> <li>• District of Summerland</li> <li>• Rural Zone Area</li> </ul>
District 69 - Qualicum	<p><u>Four Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward system with trustees elected by 4 separated geographic zones</li> </ul>
District 70 - Pacific Rim	<p><u>Two Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberni Valley</li> <li>• West Coast</li> </ul>
District 71 - Comox Valley	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Courtenay</li> <li>• Town of Comox</li> <li>• Village of Cumberland</li> <li>• Area A</li> <li>• Area C</li> </ul>
District 72 - Campbell River	<p><u>Three Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Campbell River</li> <li>• Quadra</li> <li>• Sayward Valley</li> </ul>
District 73 - Kamloops/Thompson	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Kamloops</li> <li>• District of Barriere</li> <li>• District of Logan Lake</li> <li>• District of Clear Water</li> <li>• Village of Chase/Sun Peaks</li> </ul>
District 74 - Gold Trail	<p><u>Seven Electoral Areas:</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward system with trustees elected by 7 separated geographic zones</li> </ul>
District 75 - Mission	<u>Two Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Mission</li> <li>• Fraser Valley Regional District</li> </ul>
District 78 - Fraser/Cascade	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward system with trustees elected by 3 separated geographic zones</li> </ul>
District 82 - Coast Mountains	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Terrace</li> <li>• City of Kitimat</li> <li>• District of Stewart</li> <li>• Village of Hazelton</li> <li>• Thornhill Community</li> </ul>
District 83 - North Okanagan/Shuswap	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Salmon Arm</li> <li>• City of Armstrong/ District of Spallumchen</li> <li>• City of Enderby/ District of Sicamous</li> <li>• Rural Zone Area</li> </ul>
District 84 - Vancouver Island West	<u>Four Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village of Zeballos</li> <li>• Village of Gold River</li> <li>• Village of Tahsis</li> <li>• Kyuquot Community</li> </ul>
District 85 - Vancouver Island North	<u>Three Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward system with trustees elected by 3 separated geographic zones</li> </ul>
District 87 - Stikine	<u>Five Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Atlin</li> <li>• Dease Lake</li> <li>• Iskut</li> <li>• Lower Post</li> <li>• Telegraph Creek</li> </ul>
District 91 - Nechako Lakes	<u>Six Electoral Areas:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District of Vanderhoof</li> <li>• District of Fort St. James</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Village of Burns Lake</li><li>• Village of Fraser Lake</li><li>• Village of Granisle</li><li>• Grassy Plains/Francois Lake</li></ul>
District 92 - Nisga'a	<p><u>Five Electoral Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Laxgaltsap</li><li>• Gitlaxtaamiks</li><li>• Gitwinksihkw</li><li>• Gingolx</li><li>• Nass Camp</li></ul>