

Public Engagement Session on Sept 9 Proposes Variation to Trustee Electoral Areas

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Public Engagement Session on September 9 Proposes Variation to Trustee Electoral Areas within the Greater Victoria School District

Our community is invited to a public information and engagement session to learn about a proposed variation to Trustee Electoral Areas within the Greater Victoria School District. The session will be co-hosted and attended by the Greater Victoria School District, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, the municipalities of Esquimalt, Highlands, Oak Bay, Saanich, Victoria, and View Royal, as well as the Capital Regional District (CRD).

INFORMATION SESSION DETAILS

Date: Tuesday, September 9, 2025**Time:** 7:00pm to 9:00pm**Location:** SJ Willis in the gymnasium (923 Topaz Avenue)**Format:** A brief presentation followed by an opportunity to circulate and ask questions to representatives of the school district, First Nations, municipalities, and the CRD.**Digital Feedback:** For those unable to make the session, an [online feedback form !\[\]\(c1b924320d9ec7587a1dd427119524d0_img.jpg\)](#) will be open from August 5 to September 11, 2025.

“Meaningful discussions with Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, local municipalities, and the CRD have resulted in proposed changes,” says Sherri Bell, Official Trustee, Board of Education, Greater Victoria School District. “Now, we are asking for our community to familiarize themselves with the proposed changes, ask questions, and help identify any other considerations that we reflect on.”

The collaborative discussions leading up to and including the proposed changes honour the District’s and local government’s commitment to and active participation in truth and reconciliation. The work aligns with the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s \(TRC\) final report and its 94 Calls to Action !\[\]\(b96b3a660a85c4a0498f921ce823c64a_img.jpg\)](#), as well as the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. !\[\]\(702bd704463ed73f089b4485cfbe699c_img.jpg\)](#)

“It’s encouraging to see real steps being taken to make space for Indigenous voices in decisions that shape our kids’ education and futures,” says Chief Jerome Thomas, Esquimalt Nation. “This kind of collaboration shows what’s possible when we all come to the table with respect and open minds.”

The Greater Victoria School District recognizes the letter dated March 19, 2025 from the Township of Esquimalt requesting the 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.” This letter sparked additional letters of support for changes to the trustee electoral areas within the Greater Victoria School District expressed by Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, and most municipalities that lie within the district.

“The Township of Esquimalt was the first to ask for this conversation out of our desire to build stronger relationships and reconciliation within School District 61,” says Councillor Tim Morrison, Township of Esquimalt. “Official Trustee Sherri Bell responded accordingly by facilitating inclusive collaboration among all our communities, which has resulted in our joint proposal for much needed reform on how we elect our school board and determine fair and equitable representation for the school district in which we all share.”

Upon receiving letters of support and direction from the Ministry of Education and Child Care, the Official Trustee formed a Task Force consisting of representatives of the Greater Victoria School District, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, the municipalities of Esquimalt, Highlands, Oak Bay, Saanich, Victoria, and View Royal, as well as the Capital Regional District. Task Force meetings allowed for respectful democratic discussion that resulted in the following proposed variation to trustee electoral areas which will also be detailed during the September 9 engagement session:

1. A shift from an 'at large' electoral model to a model with seven trustee electoral areas based on municipal and First Nations boundaries—a model that currently exists within most school districts in the province that serve multiple municipalities. The change has the potential to limit disproportionate representation of communities on the Board of Education and allow for more localized and inclusive representation, as well as create stronger relationships between the School Board and local Nations and municipal leaders.




2. There are no proposed changes to the number of trustees, which will remain at nine.

3. A distribution of the nine trustees amongst the seven electoral areas as follows:


- Esquimalt Nation (1 Trustee)
- Songhees Nation (1 Trustee)
- View Royal / Highlands (1 Trustee)
- Oak Bay (1 Trustee)
- Esquimalt (1 Trustee)
- Saanich (2 Trustees)
- Victoria (2 Trustees)

More information and opportunity to ask questions will be available at the public engagement on September 9. We hope to see you there!

Useful Resources

- [Capital Regional District Map](#) 
- [Trustee Electoral Areas of School Districts in BC](#) 
- [School Trustee Election Procedures in British Columbia](#) 
- [More Information](#)

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The Greater Victoria School District is proud to provide quality education for approximately 20,000 students in **28 Elementary Schools, 10 Middle Schools, and 7 Secondary Schools**. Each year, over 650 adult learners register with our **Continuing Education Program** . Our District also offers a variety of Programs of Choice.

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