



Greater Victoria Teachers' Association

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November 29, 2018

Mayor Barbara Desjardins and Council
Township of Esquimalt Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1

Dear Mayor Desjardins and Council:

Re: Police Liaison Officers

The Greater Victoria Teachers Association is writing to urge swift action on the reinstatement of Police Liaison Officers in Victoria public schools.

Our schools serve a diverse population of students from all backgrounds. Police liaison officers build beneficial relationships with students in schools, provide mentorship, promote a positive image of law enforcement, and provide critical and necessary support to students.

Police liaison officers understand the context of the schools to which they are assigned. They have specific training and experience in working with children and youth. They become a unique part of the school community, and an important resource for children, families, and teachers. Schools this year are struggling to replicate the support they received from school liaison officers.

Already this school year there have been multiple incidents of police being called to our schools. Often these calls are in response to students in crisis. To a child, there is a profound difference between having a familiar and trusted person engage and deescalate a situation, and having a stranger attempt to intervene.

Police liaison officers are used to provide support to our students experiencing abuse. In these cases, a prior relationship can be critical to our most vulnerable students as they are subjected to the stress of legal proceedings. Additionally, students who are at risk for participation in non-lawful activities benefit from established relationships with trusted adults in law enforcement.

The rationale for cutting our school Police Liaison Officers was to prioritize funding to front line services. We argue that having officers in place to serve 20 000 youth in the Victoria district is, in fact, providing front line service. We urge you to ensure funding for this vital service is restored.

Sincerely,

Jason Gammon
GVTA President

cc: GVTA Executive Committee, GVTA Staff Reps

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT			
For Information:			
<input type="checkbox"/> CAO	<input type="checkbox"/> Mayor/Council		
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RECEIVED: NOV 29 2018			
Referred: <i>Anja</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> For Action	<input type="checkbox"/> For Response	<input type="checkbox"/> COTW	
<input type="checkbox"/> For Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Agenda	<input type="checkbox"/> IC	