

Backgrounder Ver. 7 – Updated September 25, 2024

Greater Victoria SD #61 School Police Liaison Officer Program

* [BC directs Victoria school board to bring police back into schools](#)

(Victoria Buzz, Sept. 20)

“On September 17th, BC’s Minister of Education and Child Care, Rachna Singh, issued an administrative directive for an updated student safety plan in SD61. The Province says this plan is to be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Child Care as well as local police departments. SD61 must now create its updated safety plan and hand it to Singh by November 15th.

The Province’s requirements of this safety plan are that it:

- *Addresses gang activity, safety concerns, crime prevention and crisis response*
- *Improves the relationship between SD61 and the police*
- *Establishes proactive safety, crime prevention and crisis-response strategies, including student-safety supports needed for the 2024-25 school year*
- *Establishes a trauma-informed approach for interactions between students and police officers*
- *Includes a protocol for communication and coordination between SD61 and the police*
- *Describes the respective roles and responsibilities of the board and the police in preventative approaches and responses to safety concerns*
- *Establishes a process for changing the safety plan that includes collaboration with the police and provides for 60 days advance written notice of changes to the Ministry of Education and Child Care.”*

* [Board digs in on police officers in schools, after province orders safety plan](#)

(Times Colonist, Sept. 20)

* [‘Seems very political’: Greater Victoria teachers surprised by ministerial order on student safety](#) (CTV Vancouver Island, Sept. 19)

* [Victoria PD Statement on Ministerial Order to SD 61](#) (Sept. 19) <clip> “We welcome this order and are committed to moving forward with developing a collaborative plan that will create positive relationships, prevent criminal activity, address the current safety concerns, and proactively keep students safe,” says VEPB Board Chair Micayla Hayes ... Following meetings with the SD61 Board this spring, the Victoria Police Department presented the SD61 Board with a draft Memorandum of Understanding on July 31. The VEPB looks forward to receiving a response soon.”

* [Statement from the Board of Education Regarding Ministry of Education and Child Care Ministerial Order](#) (Sept. 18)

<clip> “The Board is grateful for its ongoing partnerships and looks forward to future collaboration with local police services, Rightsholders, educational partners, the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and other professionals and organizations in community that continue to support student safety. We acknowledge that each party brings a unique lens and expertise to the table and together we can continue to ensure the safety of our schools.

The Board wishes to clarify the use of the word “safety” and highlight that in our school district, the safety of a student encompasses physical, environmental, cyber, psychological, emotional, and spiritual safety. With this holistic idea of safety in mind, the Board wishes to recognize some of the many ongoing and effective programs, actions, policies and protocols that continue to keep students and staff safe within our schools:

Programs-

- [Safer Schools](#)
- [Second Step](#)
- Prevention Education through school advisories (increasing the positive relationships with Trusted and Caring Adults)
- Mental Health Grants
- Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST)
- [Island Sexual Health](#) partnership
- 2x10 practice
- Assemblies and guest presenters including Harm Reduction, Naloxone, Tobacco and Vape Prevention and Reduction
- [Youth Empowerment](#)
- [Expect Respect & a Safe Education \(ERASE\)](#)

Actions-

- Receipt of [Worrisome Online Behaviour Report](#)
- Letter to parents and caregivers about the risk associated with potential gang recruitment
- Invitation to police to host gang related information sessions at some of our secondary schools
- Meeting with principals and vice principals to review the [Code of Conduct](#) and [School Expectations](#) at both middle and secondary levels
- Established a bi-weekly check in to hear emergent concerns from secondary schools
- Added 'Safer Schools Update' to middle and secondary Emergent Meeting agendas
- Safer Schools Coordinator attends Safe Schools meetings to receive updates on gang related behaviours and trends in the Greater Victoria Area
- Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Consent education for secondary staff and students
- Associate Superintendents and Superintendent have checked in with middle and secondary principals on the start of the year and surface ongoing or new concerns
- District Counsellor and [Safe Schools Coordinator](#) met and will continue to meet with school principals who have at-risk or identified youth with concerns
- All elementary, middle, and secondary principals and vice principals have reviewed the Code of Conduct, the processes related to [Lockdown, Hold, and Secure](#)
- Ongoing review of [BDTA \(Behaviour and Digital Threat Assessment\)](#) including Section 5 (7) and authority for searching a student's backpack, locker
- Monthly reporting on police call outs to schools
- Summer reach out to police services prior to the new school year

Policies-

- 1155 [Complaint Process for a Resolution of Concerns](#)
- 1300 [Acceptable Use of Digital Technology](#)
- 1305 [Social Media Use](#)
- 4116 [Sexual Harassment](#)
- 4303 [Discrimination](#)
- 4304 [Bullying and Harassment](#)
- 4305 [Gender Identity & Gender Expression](#)
- 0 [Personal Safety & Security](#)
- 1 [Discipline](#)
- 2 [Threats to Students, Employees, or Volunteer Sponsors](#)
- 3 [Prohibition of Weapons in Schools](#)
- 4 [Substance Abuse](#)
- 5 [Smoking](#)
- 6 [Student Attendance](#)

- 7 [Student Suspensions](#)
- 5132 [Student Dress Code](#)
- 5134 [Student Input](#)
- 1 [Child Abuse](#)
- 5145 [Police Questioning of Students in Schools](#)
- 6114 [Maintenance of Order](#)
- 03 [Physical Restraint](#)
- 8400 [Whistleblower Protection](#)

* [CHEK News coverage of Ministerial order with film clip](#) (Sept. 17)

* Aug. 30 letter from Minister Farnworth and Minister Singh to the Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board (included in the board's [Sept. 17 agenda, pp. 19-20](#))

* July 12 letter from Minister Singh regarding student safety in School District #61 (included in the VEPB's [Aug. 20 agenda, pg. 15](#))

* **School District #61 FAQ** (published April 2024)

<https://www.sd61.bc.ca/splo-faq/>

1. What was the School Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) program and how was it delivered in the Greater Victoria School District?
2. Does the SD61 pay for SPLOs?
3. How often were SPLOs in schools?
4. What led to a review of the program?
5. How was the review conducted?
6. What consultation process was used during the SPLO program review?
7. Why did the Board of Education end the SPLO program?
8. According to the SD61 survey the majority of survey participants support SPLOs. Why should we end the program because of a few concerns?
9. Are police allowed in schools?
10. Are police being tracked/monitored on school grounds?
11. Is crime increasing in schools?
12. What about police taking a more trauma informed approach in schools, for example wearing golf shirts and not carrying firearms?
13. What change in services can students expect since the Board of Education's decision?
14. **More Information**

* [Statement from the Board of Education Regarding SPLO Program & FAQ Resource](#) (April 19, 2024)

* [Victoria Police Board Public Agenda, July 16, 2024](#) + [video](#) begins at 4:22, includes comments from **CRED's Mia Golden, Chief Manak** (starting at 33:52) and **BC Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender** (starting at 37:56). This portion of the meeting ends at 1:05:00.

- Commissioner Govinder states (56:50) that her request to the Solicitor General for evidence-based research about the impacts of SPLOs has been rejected. She requested support from Victoria PD for a renewed call to the province for this data.

- During public comment starting at 1:41:00, VFCYJC's Marcie McLean speaks to the issue in her role as a Highlands councillor. She notes that it will be worthwhile to revisit results of the public survey conducted by the SD #61 [SPLO Public Survey published in its May 31, 2023 agenda \(see pp. 78-102\)](#).

- Reference is made to a report titled [The State of School Liaison Programs in Canada](#) (Dr. Kanika Samuels-Wortley, May 2021), funded by the Human Rights Commissioner.

* News Clipping: *"Youth counsellor says lack of liaison officers is making things worse in schools: Counsellors are no substitute for police when it comes to dealing with the criminal element in schools, says a counsellor on Victoria's mobile youth services team."* - Andrew Duffy, [Times Colonist](#), July 18, 2024

* Community Advocating for Students and Safety (CASS) presentation set for May 27, 2024 SD #61 board meeting (see power point, [agenda pp. 18-38](#)) by anti-racism and equity consultant [Dr. Lisa Gunderson](#)

* **Mia Golden** presentation to SD #61 board at its April 29, 2024 meeting ([video](#); five-minute presentation begins at 7:30, ends at 17:20. Trustee Kwan notes possible synchronicities between MYST and the Capital Regional Action Team).

* **Public Q&A re: SPLO program** captured in the SD #61 draft minutes of April 29 meeting – see [May 27 agenda pp. 10-11](#).

* Letters in the [April 29 SD #61 agenda package](#) (pp. 21-26) from [Pink Sheep Media's Stephen Harrison](#) (in favour of the decision) and the **Northridge Elementary School Parent Advisory Council** (opposed.)

* **Victoria PD Chief Del Manak** presentation to SD #61 board at its meeting of Feb. 27, 2024 re: the decision not to utilize SPLOs from Oak Bay Police, Saanich Police and the RCMP. (see [video](#) from 3:20 to 10:38).

* **Del Manak**: [Statement on Student Safety in SD #61](#) (presented to the SD #61 board at its meeting of Feb. 27, 2024).

<clip> *"Parents, police and educators working together is how we are going to keep our kids safe. SPLOs are critical to the deterrence and prevention of crime, violent activity, and gang recruitment in schools. I am respectfully asking that student safety be made a top priority in our*

schools. I am requesting that the SD61 Board re-instate the SPLO program immediately and create a small sub-committee that includes students, PAC reps, teachers, administrators and police officers to discuss what barriers exist for some students to have police in schools, and how we can reduce trauma for those students who don't feel comfortable with officers in schools. I am ready to commit officers to this program immediately. Building relationships is our best way forward, so let's sit down and address these concerns head-on with an eye to building trust and mutual understanding."

* April 23 letter from **Greater Victoria Teachers' Association** to City of Victoria Council ([see agenda pp. 15/16](#)).

<clip> *"It is the teachers' position that programs formerly provided by SPLOs are more appropriately provided by educators, social workers, and public health workers with extensive and specialized training for working with children and youth ... The GVTA would like to provide input as to how the City can reallocate money formerly spent on SPLOs to programs that enhance protective factors for youth and community wellbeing.*

These could include:

~ Enhancing grants to after school community programming administered through youth agencies such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Native Friendship Centre, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre

~ Creating arts and sports grants to enable more youth to participate in afterschool activities

~ Funding a District Based Teacher-Counsellor focused on enhancing youth resiliency

~ Funding a District Based Public Health Nurse to provide resources and classroom presentations

~ Enhancing funding for family counselling services through agencies such as Hulitan and Family Services of Greater Victoria.

* **City of Victoria Council** meeting [agenda of April 25, 2024](#) also includes:

- **"Racial Disparities in British Columbia Police Statistics: A Preliminary Examination of a Complex Issue"** – Scot Wortley, PhD, with funding from BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. ([pp. 17-275](#))

- April 12, 2021 request from the **Office of the Human Rights Commissioner** to the RCMP for demographic data for various policing activities and outcomes. ([pp. 276-311](#))

- **"Policing In Schools Project,"** BC Teachers' Federation, Dec. 2022 ([pp. 312-335](#))

- ***“Racism in Greater Victoria: A Community Report,”*** Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria ([pp. 336-389](#))
- ***“Event-level outcomes of police interactions with young people in three non-metropolitan cities across British Columbia, Canada,”*** University of Victoria, published in the, International Journal of Drug Policy, 2020 ([pp. 390-397](#))
- ***“Counsellors Not Cops: Ending the Regular Presence of Law Enforcement In Schools,”*** Dignity In Schools Campaign, 2016 ([pp. 398-404](#))
- ***“Racial Profiling,”*** BC Civil Liberties Association, 2010, includes papers presented at the BCLA conference on racial profiling ([pp. 405-530](#))
- * **Correspondence to the SD #61 board** from the Khalsa Diwan Society of Victoria, the Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees, the Jewish Federation of Victoria and Vancouver Island, and the Victoria Multifaith Society in the [Sept. 25, 2023 board agenda](#) ([pp. 53-61](#))

2024 Municipal Motions

- **Oak Bay** (April 8, 2024)

[Item 12.1 from the agenda](#): **“That the Mayor write a letter to the Board of Education for School District No. 61 asking them to work with the Oak Bay Police Board to implement a re-defined Police Liaison Officer position.” CARRIED**

“Dr. Lisa Gunderson spoke in favour of the motion, referencing the [Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Council](#)’s research, and encouraged Council to review the data”. + [VCPAC’s SPLO List of Service Provisions](#)

- **City of Victoria** (April 4, 2024)

[Item H.1 from the agenda](#): **“That Council request the Mayor to write to the Chair of the Board of Education for School District 61 requesting reinstatement of the Police School Liaison Officers and that the letter be copied to the appropriate Provincial bodies, other School District 61 school hosting municipalities, and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.”**

Final motion amended as per the [April 4 minutes](#):

1. That Council request the Mayor to write to the Chair of the Board of Education for School District 61:
 1. requesting information on the rationale informing its decision to end the police school liaison officer program,
 2. urging SD61 to engage directly with diverse community interests,
 3. and further requesting reinstatement of the Police School Liaison Officers.

2. That the letter be copied to the appropriate Provincial bodies, other School District 61 school hosting municipalities, and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.

CARRIED: 5-4

Opposed: Caradonna, Dell, Kim, Thompson

- **District of Saanich** (March 11, 2024)

[Item H from the agenda](#) **“That Council request the Mayor write to the Chair of the Board of Education for School District 61 requesting reinstatement of the Police School Liaison Officers and that the letter be copied to the appropriate Provincial bodies, other School District 61 school hosting municipalities and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.”**

CARRIED + [Subsequent letter](#) from Mayor Dean Murdock dated March 14

- Motions in support of SPLO sent in summer 2023 by City of Langford, District of Highlands and District of Metchosin.

2024 News Clippings

- [“Board’s opposition to police in schools puts racialized people in ‘victim role,’ says youth counsellor Mia Golden”](#) – Times Colonist, May 1

- [“School Police Form Letters Aimed at City Hall”](#) – Times Colonist, May 3

- [“SD #61 Trustees Say Police Liaison Submission Not Appropriate”](#) – Times Colonist, May 7

- [“VicPD chief reiterates calls to reinstate school police liaison officers”](#) – CHEK News, April 23

- [“Victoria Area Municipalities Call For Return Of Police In Schools”](#) – CBC News, April 10

- [“Victoria motion to send letter asking for school liaison officers to be reinstated narrowly passes”](#) – CHEK News, April 5

* **Facebook Group:** [Parents & Police Together for SD #61 and SD#62](#)

Minutes from Sept. 23, 2023 VFCYJC meeting

Invited guest: Nicole Duncan, SD #62 Chair

10.1 Committee discussion re: decision of School District 61 Board of Education to end the School Police Liaison Officer Program at School District 61 Schools

- N. Duncan clarified that there was correspondence received over 3 years not just before the School Board meeting. SD 61 took seriously the Human Rights Commissioner Report, world events and it was time for a review as factors in the decision re the end of the School Police Liaison Officer Program in School District 61 Schools.
- Important to keep open dialogue. Priority that schools are a safe and inclusive places.
- There are gaps and students are struggling. The work that M.Y.S.T. is doing is valued.

- The relationships that police form with children is important.
- M. Westhaver expressed sincere appreciation of the Hockey Heroes Program for marginalized youth which is predominantly Indigenous youth. Police Officers make a huge contribution to this program.
- C. Beaton shared that School District 62 is creating a video about its continued positive involvement with the SPLO program for posting on its website. Schools are an extension of the community so SD 62 is grateful for police involvement.

Summary of related SD #61 Motions (reverse chronological)

May 31, 2023: That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Board Chair to write to the Minister of Education and Child Care and the Premier requesting that the provincial government commit to adequate ongoing funding for civilian alternatives to SPLOs such as civilian coaches, youth and family counsellors, social workers, substance use educators, restorative justice initiatives, etc.- so that all school districts have adequate resources to deliver necessary services through the education system utilizing appropriately trained, certified and regulated professionals.

May 31, 2023: That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Board Chair to write to the Minister of Education and Child Care and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General urging them to immediately commission research into the impacts of SPLO programs on K-12 students in BC.

May 31, 2023: That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to end the SPLO Program; AND FURTHER the Superintendent will ensure that protocols are established in relation to the following matters: school emergencies, lockdowns, critical incidents, Violent Threat Risk Assessments and ongoing District tracking of all student interactions with Police while in the care of the Board of Education; AND FURTHER The Superintendent will provide the Board of Education with a list of the services no longer provided by SPLOs and suggestions for service provision moving forward.

May 29, 2023: That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) consider the School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee report at a Special Board Meeting to be scheduled in [May 2023](#).

June 22, 2020: That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to undertake discussions with members of the school community, including, but not limited to, racialized, Indigenous and LGBTQ staff, parents and students to: 1. Determine what, if any, concerns there may be regarding the District's School Police Liaison Officer program; and 2. Develop recommendations, as required, on what changes should be made to the program to improve its value to the school community.

Sept. 1, 2023 - [Vancouver School Board website](#) School Liaison Officer Program

See the VSB's revised SLO program [Memorandum of Understanding](#)

"In November 2022, trustees on the Vancouver School Board passed a motion to implement a revised School Liaison Officer (SLO) program beginning September 2023. In collaboration with VSB and Vancouver Police Department, the SLO program has been reimagined based on feedback heard during the 2021 SLO engagement and the subsequent report. The program was further informed by input from community members, students and staff, as well as feedback from the Indigenous Education Council and the VPD's Indigenous Advisory Committee.

The revised program will enhance the safety of schools, ensuring they are caring, welcoming and inclusive places for all students, their families and staff. The program will implement proactive educational and interventional measures to support students in making positive decisions and to help avoid them becoming involved with the criminal justice system. SLOs will be available to any student or family member for support and guidance. The revised program is staffed by officers who come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, who have also received specific training to support them in this unique role.

A steering committee with VSB and VPD representatives will monitor the program's implementation and operations. Updates and information about the program will continue to be provided through VSB's Policy and Governance Committee."

* ["Police Officers Return to Vancouver Schools Alongside Students – Despite Concerns from Some Parents,"](#) CBC News, Sept. 5, 2023

* ["School Police Liaison Will Appear Less Formal, Have Smaller Firearms, Vancouver Police Briefing Says,"](#) CBC News, May 1, 2023 <clip> *"Insp. Gary Hiar with the VPD's youth services and mental health unit presented an initial revamp of the program to the board that will feature cultural awareness training for officers, more diverse hiring and the use of unmarked vehicles. Officers will wear less formal uniforms, such as golf or polo-style shirts and hiking pants. They will still carry weapons, but smaller ones that are less exposed."*

Backgrounder Version 3 – November, 2023

Reference: SD #61 motion

<https://www.sd61.bc.ca/board-of-education/approved-motions/page/2/>

May 31, 2023

Approved Motion: Add three Community Presentations under A.3. A.3.c. Mark Jenkins A.3.d. Matt Christie A.3.e. Elaine Ho

Action: Three Community Presentations were added under A.3. A.3.c. Mark Jenkins A.3.d. Matt Christie A.3.e. Elaine Ho

Approved Motion: That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to end the SPLO Program; AND FURTHER the Superintendent will ensure that protocols are established in relation to the following matters: school emergencies, lockdowns, critical incidents, Violent Threat Risk Assessments and ongoing District tracking of all student interactions with Police while in the care of the Board of Education; AND FURTHER The Superintendent will provide the Board of Education with a list of the services no longer provided by SPLOs and suggestions for service provision moving forward.

Action: Superintendent to end the SPLO Program; AND FURTHER the Superintendent will ensure that protocols are established in relation to the following matters: school emergencies, lockdowns, critical incidents, Violent Threat Risk Assessments and ongoing District tracking of all student interactions with Police while in the care of the Board of Education; AND FURTHER The Superintendent will provide the Board of Education with a list of the services no longer provided by SPLOs and suggestions for service provision moving forward.

Updated for Backgrounder Ver. 3.0

Note to VFCYJC from SD #62 trustee/VFC appointee Cendra Beaton:

“Here is the role that school liaison officers provide in our district:

- supporting students dealing with crisis or needs.
- creating a strong support system and relation with students
- building connections and community engagement
- partner with classroom teachers to build understanding around the use and misuse of drug and alcohol substances, as well as the safe use of social media
- schools are part of the broader community and this creates a partnership and relationship with the district and students

I want to be clear that I have no intention to oppose the will and direction of other school districts. I just wanted to share the great work happening in our school district to benefit our students and staff overall.

It just so happens that we will be releasing a video in the near future, through our district’s social media, that will detail the partnership and role that liaison officers provide for us to help build a greater sense of understanding of what they do. Please stay tuned. I will be happy to share once it is released.”

Sept. 15/23 Updated material for Backgrounder Ver. 2.0

Letters supporting SPLO have been sent to Westshore RCMP in summer 2023 by

- Town Of View Royal
- District of Highlands
- City of Langford
- District of Metchosin

*** Town Of View Royal letter to Westshore RCMP – June 22, 2023**

States that View Royal Council supports and encourages school liaison programs in View Royal schools, including, but not limited to, crime prevention, traffic and personal safety programs.”

See pg. 529

<https://pub-langford.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=6610>

*** District of Highlands Council Minutes – July 17, 2023**

Correspondence, Town of View Royal, June 22, 2023 (0400.60)

RE: SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAMS IN VIEW ROYAL SCHOOLS

Moved Councillor McLean, Seconded Councillor Gord Baird That Council direct staff to send a letter to Supt. Todd Preston, West Shore RCMP along the lines of the handwritten submission by Councillor McLean, attached to and forming part of these minutes as ‘Appendix A’, regarding the School Police Liaison Officer Program. With copies sent to the Greater Victoria School District 61, 62 and 63, Songhees First Nation, Esquimalt First Nation, City of Victoria Police Chief, District of Saanich Police Chief, District of Central Saanich Police Chief, Ian Lawson, City of Colwood, City of Langford, City of Victoria, District of Metchosin, District of Oak Bay, District of Saanich, District of Central Saanich, District of Sooke.

See Highlands letter sent on Aug. 2, 2023 on pp. 135/36 here:

<https://metchosin.civicweb.net/filepro/document/13751/Council%20Meeting%20-%2014%20Aug%202023%20Agenda.pdf?widget=true>

*** City of Langford – Council meeting of July 17, 2023**

School Liaison Programs in View Royal Schools

MOVED BY: SZPAK SECONDED: HARDER

Motion CARRIED.

OPPOSED: Councillor Guiry, Councillor Harder, Councillor Yacucha

THAT Council direct staff to send a letter to Superintendent Preston (Westshore RCMP), with a copy to the Chair of School District No. 62 (Sooke) as well as the following organizations: Songhees First Nations; Esquimalt Nation; City of Colwood; City of Victoria; District of Highlands; District of Metchosin; District of Oak Bay; Township of Esquimalt; Inspector Rose Westshore RCMP

Stating that Langford Council wish to support and encourage the ongoing School Liaison Program in School District No. 62 (Sooke) schools with their current approaches.

City of Langford letter sent on July 18. See pg. 133:

<https://metchosin.civicweb.net/filepro/document/13751/Council%20Meeting%20-%2014%20Aug%202023%20Agenda.pdf?widget=true>

*** District of Metchosin – Meeting of Aug. 14, 2023** Excerpt from minutes, see pg. 12:

<https://metchosin.civicweb.net/filepro/document/14123/Council%20Meeting%20-%2011%20Sep%202023%20Agenda.pdf?widget=true>

c) City of Langford, School Liaison Programs in Sooke School District No. 62 Schools

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Epp and Donaldson that Council through the Mayor send a

letter to School District No. 62 regarding the School Liaison Programs in Sooke Schools.
Carried Councillor Gray opposed the motion.

d) District of Highlands, School Police Liaison Officer Programs in School District No. 61 Schools Moved and Seconded by Councillors Epp and Donaldson that Council receive the correspondence from the District of Highlands regarding School Police Liaison Officer Programs in School District No. 61 Schools for information. **Carried**

- [Westshore RCMP Comments, Parents Survey](#) – *Island Social Trends* (Aug. 9, 2023)

- [Langford Council Wades Into RCMP School Liaison](#) – *Island Social Trends* (July 19, 2023)

* From the June 22, 2023 VFCYJC Minutes

9.4. SD #61 Termination of School Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) program

J. Bateman prepared a backgrounder on the issue for VFC&YJ Committee meeting.

Discussion

- In general, VFC&YJ Committee members considered SPLO programs provided benefits for kids/families and cancelling SPLO programs could have negative unintended or undetermined consequences. Youth cannot be turned away from SPLO programs, as may be the case with other agencies.
- Confidentiality of information makes it difficult to get this empirical data.
- SPLO programs foster building relationships and establishing trust with School Districts.
- Law enforcement, schools and the broader community needs to work together re youth exploitation and the concern re gang recruitment.
- The School Police Liaison Officer program often is the first line of communication to avoid youth entering justice system. If the funding is removed from the police budget, it will be very hard to get it reinstated.
- VFCYJ Committee members are interested in gaining understanding of School District 61 rationale for deciding May 31 to end their SPLO program.

To receive this as information and continue the conversation in September.

* Email from VFCYJC appointee Councillor Zeb King

On **Thu, Jun 22, 2023** at 3:11 PM Zeb King <zebking@zebking.ca> wrote:

Thanks to all for the excellent discussion at [today's](#) Victoria, Family and Youth Justice Committee meeting and particularly regarding SD61. I found the School District 61 Board meeting that lasted over 1.5 hours – on [May 31, 2023](#). The presentations and discussion were fascinating and informative from both sides of this issue and included police boards, police, a psychiatric social worker, parents, teachers, the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association (GVTA) and others. There were also letters citing some data.

The decision of the nine School Board 61 trustees apparently followed a three-year review and was unanimous on not only one motion but three individual motions. The entire meeting remained on this topic for over 1.5 hours.

I'm sharing this link to assist and I completely recommend listening: <https://www.youtube.com/live/EAAqB0aP9CA?feature=share>

I found the deliberation of trustees to be profoundly considered. I heard them express concerns about safety, gangs, crime and more.

Thanks for educating me on this topic. I wasn't looking to spend more time listening to another jurisdiction's meeting, but I'm glad that I did.

With appreciation,

Zeb King

[SD61 May 31 Agenda](#) + [SD61 May 31 Supplemental Information](#)

June 2023 - VER. 1.0 BACKGROUNDER

Prepared in early June for submission to the June 22, 2023 VFCYJC Committee meeting

Greater Victoria SD #61 School Police Liaison Officer Program

Timeline

- **Sept. 2020:** Greater Victoria SD #61 board moves to form a committee to review its School Police Liaison Officer Program

- **Nov. 26, 2020:** First meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee, continues monthly meetings through 2022

The Committee has 21 members, including four student representatives, one representative from the Esquimalt Nations, two representatives from GVTA, two representatives from CUPE, two representatives from VCPAC, one representative from Victoria Police Department and two representatives from Saanich Police Department, two members of the Senior Leadership Team, two School Administrators, one School District Communications staff member, and two Trustees.

- **Oct. 12, 2021:** Public survey launched - <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/news/title/greater-victoria-school-district-seeks-input-on-school-police-liaison-officer-program/>

- **May 31, 2023: Board of Trustees meeting ...**

- Board agenda: <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2023/05/May-31-2023-Special-Open-Board-of-Education-Meeting.pdf>

- **Video replay:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAAqB0aP9CA> (starts at 2:35)

Two motions: (read and voted on at 1 hour 25 minutes ... both passed unanimously)

1. To direct the superintendent to end the SPLO program;

- and further the superintendent will ensure protocols are established in relation to the following matters: school emergencies, lockdowns, critical incidents, violence threat-risk assessments; and ongoing district tracking of all student interactions with police while in the care of the Board of Education;

- and further that the superintendent will supply the board with a list of the services no longer provided by SPLOs and suggestions for service provision moving forward.

2. Second to advocate with the ministries of Education, Children & Families, and Solicitor General to immediately commission research into impacts of SPLO programs on K-12 students in BC.

(Transcribed; no text version of these motions was found.)

See agenda pp. 62-71 for recommendations from the Greater Victoria School District's SPLO Program Review Ad Hoc Committee.

See pp. 72-77 for Chair Duncan's reports re: Ad Hoc Committee meetings in 2020/21

See pp. 86-102 for final report on the SPLO Program Survey

See pp. 102-105 for Nov. 24, 2022 letter from BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender, which concludes: "*Out of respect for the rights of our students, I strongly recommend that all school districts end the use of School Liaison Officers until the impact of these programs can be established empirically.*"

See pp. 147-173 for *Overview of School Police Liaison Officer Job Descriptions* prepared by Jennifer Chambers, GVSD District Counsellor)

Agenda's correspondence package (pp. 4-61) includes letters ... Note from Nicole Duncan: SD 61 also received letters in support of the program that were not included in the agenda.

- In support of ending the program and seeking alternatives:

1. Greater Victoria Teachers' Association
2. Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour
3. Letters of support from community members

- Against ending the program:

1. Victoria PD Chief Constable Del Manak
 2. Tillicum Elementary School PAC
 3. Tillicum Community School
 4. Saanich Police Department Chief Constable
 5. Saanich Police Community Engagement Division
 6. Victoria Principals and Vice-Principals Association
 7. Tillicum Elementary teachers
 8. West Shore RCMP Officer-In-Charge Todd Preston
 9. Saanich Police Community Engagement (Jody Pavesic)
 10. Greater Victoria SD Secondary District Counsellor Jennifer Chambers
 11. Oak Bay Police Department
- Plus: citizen correspondence

- May 31 board supplemental agenda: <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2023/05/C.3.a.-Nicole-Duncan-Memo-SPLO-Ad-Hoc-Memo-Spring-2023.pdf>

June 2023 statement by Chair Duncan: <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/news/title/statement-from-board-chair-duncan-regarding-the-school-police-liaison-officer-program/>

Related News Clippings

June 7, 2023: Victoria Now:

https://www.victorianow.com/watercooler/news/news/Victoria/Greater_Victoria_School_District_board_votes_to_end_police_liaison_program/#fs_125896

<clip> “Police are being asked to fill in gaps in student support and to take on roles that should be filled by individuals with specialized expertise, such as youth and family counsellors and social workers,” explained Duncan. “Further funding is required for this specialized support, and the board has committed to advocating for this funding from the provincial government.”

June 2, 2023: <https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/greater-victoria-school-board-votes-to-end-police-school-liaison-program-7084904>

<clip> “**Saanich Police Chief Dean Duthie** called the school board decision “very disappointing,” noting that it ends decades of participation in the program by his department.

The decision effectively means the six officers who work full-time in the program will be immediately leaving their roles at 25 schools, Duthie said. “I met with our team [Thursday] morning and our officers are emotionally taken aback,” he said. “They’re upset at a deep level because they’re so committed and so passionate about their work with students, making a difference in their lives.”

Positive relationships that have developed are being lost, Duthie said. “It’ll essentially be removing police officers from schools on a daily basis, with the educational presentations they give, the informal engagements that happen, the drop-ins, the one-on-one discussion, the prevention talks about bullying, about online safety, about drug and alcohol awareness.”

<clip> “**School board chair Nicole Duncan** said trustees had to consider the “trauma and harm” that police presence can mean for some students, including those who are Black and Indigenous. The Greater Victoria School District said in a statement that the program has seen “many positive interactions,” but the board is committed to providing “trauma-informed support and inclusive spaces for all students.”

While the board is looking to end the program, Duncan said, it has directed the district’s superintendent to develop protocols “to ensure that, where it’s appropriate and necessary to have police involved in the goings-on at our schools, that we do so in a clear fashion.”

That can involve having police at schools for such things as emergencies, lockdowns or the assessment of threats, Duncan said. “We really want to continue to have a good and strong relationship with police when it’s appropriate to do so,” she said. “The police will –continue to be our partners in raising awareness and providing the public with information around the risks of gang recruitment.”

May 3, 2023: <https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/greater-victoria-trustees-mull-future-of-school-liaison-officer-program-6942960>

March 22, 2023: <https://www.vicnews.com/news/funding-remains-amid-calls-to-end-victoria-polices-paused-school-liaison-program/>

Sept. 2021: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/greater-victoria-school-board-seeks-input-police-liaisons-1.6219953>

Depending on who you ask, police liaisons make students feel more or less safe in schools. It's a question the Greater Victoria School District (SD61) is currently grappling with. School police liaisons are officers that spend time in schools, making safety presentations and assisting in any way the school asks.

But in June 2020, after the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, a school trustee in Victoria, B.C., put forward a motion to suspend the program in his district. He was outvoted, but the board did agree to review the program — to see if there are improvements to be made, or if the program should be scrapped entirely.

<clip> Dominique Jacobs of the Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Color ... has been advocating for an end to the program since the motion to suspend it was introduced last year. "We've told SD61 over, and over, and over, that BIPOC families do not want police liaison officers in the schools. So it seems a little bit redundant, and also insulting, when you are constantly feeling like you're being dismissed."

<clip> Mia Golden, a counsellor, says she sees in her work how valuable liaison officers can be. Golden works with schools and police on initiatives to prevent child exploitation. She says she's seen the positive relationships liaison officers can build with students, and that those relationships can pay off in tough situations — for example, if a student has to report a sexual assault. "If they have to provide a statement to a complete stranger, that only compounds that distress and that traumatic event," she said. Instead, liaison officers can provide comfort to students, she says.

- **June 23, 2020:** "Vancouver, Victoria School Trustees vote to review police school liaison program" (Vancouver Sun) <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/vancouver-victoria-school-trustees-vote-to-review-police-school-liaison-program>

Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee (past advocacy)

Sept. 5, 2018 - Cynthia Day letter to Victoria-Esquimalt Police Board re: loss of school liaison officers in Victoria and Esquimalt ... see pg. 15 of the 2018 Annual Report
<https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2018-VFCYJC-Annual-Report-Final.pdf>

September 5, 2018 VICTORIA-ESQUIMALT POLICE BOARD

Dear Co-Chairs Mayor Lisa Helps and Mayor Barb Desjardins,

The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee have great concern about the loss of School Liaison Officers in Victoria and Esquimalt. I understand that the Police Board will be meeting on September 18 and would appreciate your consideration of our input at that time.

From your last meeting in July, it is clear that "digital technologies are producing unprecedented levels of online child abuse material and incidents of exploitation and trafficking. From 2012 to 2014, the number of webpages dedicated to the sale and trafficking, as well as the sharing of sexual abuse materials of children, increased by 147%, with children 10 years and under portrayed in 80% of incidents" and that "355 offenders were identified as actively engaging in the trade of child exploitation

material on Vancouver Island, with almost half (149) of the offenders associated to Internet Protocol (IP) Addresses located in Victoria and the surrounding area.”

Our committee includes the Capital Region Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth (CRAT) and we are doing our very best to educate youth about the risks of online exploitation. The lack of Police Liaison Officers in our schools will not help to address this major issue and represents a considerable loss to our youth police relationships. Relationships are the greatest defense for our youth.

In February of 2019 we will again be bringing TC02 presentations free of charge to local schools, put on by Children of the Street Society and facilitated by CRAT and MYST. This major undertaking of the Family Court Committee has been accomplished annually for more than 10 years and represents our continued commitment to preventing child exploitation and increasing youth safety through education, which will now be even harder for us to do without partners like our school liaison officers. (Please feel free to share the attached poster.)

Sincerely, Cynthia Day, Chair Cc: Del Manak, Victoria Police Chief, Victoria City Council, Esquimalt Council

Miscellaneous

- Saanich Police Department Community Liaison Section: <https://saanichpolice.ca/community-programs/community-liaison-section/>
- “Keeping Police Out of Victoria and Esquimalt Schools” (blog post, Nov. 2019) <https://www.needsmorespikes.com/blog/2019/11/keeping-police-out-of-victoria-and-esquimalt-schools>
- New BC Provincial Policing Standards (effective July 30, 2023)
- * Promotion of Unbiased Policing <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/police/standards/6-1-1-promote-unbiased.pdf>
- * Community Partnerships and Equitable Policing <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/police/standards/6-1-2-community-engagement.pdf>
- Vancouver** – “New Vancouver School Board Trustees Moving to Reinstate School Liaison Officers (Globe & Mail, Nov. 22, 2022) <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-new-vancouver-school-board-trustees-moving-to-reinstate-school-liaison/>
- “Despite Claims, School Liaison Officers Received No Special Training” (The Tyee, Jan. 13, 2023) <https://thetyee.ca/News/2023/01/13/School-Liaison-Officers-No-Special-Training/>