



# BCEdAccess

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To whom it may concern:

The BCEdAccess Society is an organization of families of children and youth with disabilities and complex learners from all over the province of British Columbia. We champion and support these children and youth to reach their full potential in BC education, and in all aspects of their lives. Our goals are achieved through supporting families, sharing information, and working collaboratively with other not for profit organizations and charities to assist them in their work towards inclusion in education. It is with this in mind that we are writing out of concern for the upcoming Vancouver School Board 39 motion to return School Liaison Officers to Vancouver schools.

It is the position of BCEdAccess that if schools are to be inclusive to Black and Indigenous students, then the SLO program must be terminated. Furthermore, the Vancouver School District must centre Black and Indigenous community members in their decision-making. The decision to remove SLOs from Vancouver schools was made after careful deliberation and consultation and should not be so easily reversed.

As parents, we want schools to be places where all children and youth feel welcome, safe, and valued. This is not the case for many Black, Indigenous, and racialized students who do not feel safe at schools where police are present. Disabled students (including Black, Indigenous and racialized disabled students) also report feeling unsafe. Recent research demonstrates the ineffectiveness and negative impacts of SLOs in schools.

We cannot ignore that the roots of modern policing are grounded in harm. The ongoing racism and abuses of power in these institutions today is well documented. BC has the highest rate of police-involved deaths per capita in the country. Further, Indigenous and Black communities are over-represented in racial profiling and carding practices, as well as in prisons. A commitment to anti-racism requires more than future studies. It demands immediate action. This motion will move anti-racism backwards in Vancouver and our province.

As a non-profit society with a mandate for equitable access to education, we know that the overrepresentation in rates of incarceration and the life-long trauma of racist policing disproportionately harms Black and Indigenous students. We support the families who have been harmed and excluded from public education because of the School Liaison Officer program.

Our expectation is that the VSB will start to acknowledge and address systemic anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and protect children and youth from bias in policing by consulting with the affected community members

Regards,

Nicole Kaler and Tracy Humphreys

Chair and Executive Director, BCEdAccess Society