

April 23, 2025

Hello Saanich School Trustees

First and foremost, thank you for providing this opportunity for teachers to voice their experiences openly.

My name is Justine Shaw, and I have proudly served as a teacher in the Saanich School District for 15 years. Over that time, I've witnessed the ups and downs of budgeting, but what deeply concerns me now is the pattern of cuts happening alongside continued salary increases and high spending at the leadership level.

This disparity sends a troubling message to those of us working directly with students. Teachers are being asked to do more with less—less support, fewer resources, and shrinking access to essential services. For example, many teachers are being asked to step into roles traditionally held by speech-language pathologists or counsellors. At the same time, basic classroom supplies and resources are being cut, leaving many of us paying out of pocket to meet our students' needs. My students were forced to learn off a broken projector for months, only to hear that our Superintendent went to a Tech Conference in the United States for thousands of dollars, which only reinforces these negative perceptions.

What's even more discouraging is the disconnect between the district leadership and our classrooms. Honestly, I don't think I could identify most senior district staff if I saw them in person. These individuals are earning significant salaries, yet their presence and impact in my classroom feel nonexistent. I go home many days drained from managing the emotional and logistical challenges of a class of 25 students. Some nights, I lie awake questioning why some of my neediest students are allowed to slip through the cracks.

Hearing about the upcoming cuts while knowing that district staff funding has increased only adds to the frustration and makes these challenges even harder to bear. I encourage you to review how resources are being allocated in Saanich and who is being left behind in the process. Students should be at the center of every financial decision. We need transparency, fairness, and a real commitment to investing in our classrooms, where the work of education truly happens.

Thank you,
Justine