

Wednesday, June 11th, 2025

Tim Dunford
Board of Education
School District 63 (Saanich)

Dear Tim Dunford:

Subject: Trustee Remuneration

As you are aware, on May 7th, 2025, at a Special Meeting of the Board the board adopted the preliminary budget for the 2025-2026 school year. A part of the budget included a cap on Educational Assistant hiring. Next year, when there is an increase in funding as a result of an increase in the enrollment of students with special needs, additional EAs to support students with special needs will not be hired. It has been argued that this is not a cut, but regardless of how it is framed, there will be a reduction to services to students with Special Needs next school year.

In a meeting a month after the passing of the budget several Board Trustees advocated for an increase to their remuneration to be greater than the minimum provided in Board Policy. Board Policy states that the minimum is "no less than the economic increase to CUPE support staff wages in any year."

For decades, the Association has argued that if cuts to the budget are required, those cuts are to be made furthest from the classroom. We hope that you can recognize the decision of the board resulted in not only cuts to the classroom, but to the very students that need additional support in our schools, and at the same time several Board Trustees are advocating in public meetings for pay increases for themselves.

This is an example of the growing disconnect between the Board and front line staff.

We recognize that the total remuneration for all trustees is very small when compared to the total remunerations of all EAs. Even a significant increase to trustee remuneration will have little overall impact on the budget. It is our hope that you will at least recognize the concerning optics of increases to district management/trustees at the same time as cuts to classrooms.

In conclusion the Association believes that the board when tying their pay to CUPE wage increases made a bold statement. Though we do not know the intention of the board to



include this as board policy, we note that CUPE is significantly underpaid in comparison to our neighbouring Districts. If the current board wishes to have a significant increase to their remuneration, it would seem advocating for a significant increase for our CUPE colleagues would be the best solution for the board, should they also wish to receive a significant increase to their pay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Peterson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Don Peterson
President

CC: STA-Executive Committee
STA- Representative Assembly
CUPE441
Confederation of Parents' Advisory Councils of Saanich