

September 20, 2023

A Message from the Superintendent – Schools as Safe and Inclusive Spaces

In the Saanich School District we believe that we all have a responsibility to proactively create safe, caring and inclusive environments for every child and adult in our working and learning spaces. The safety, dignity and respect for everyone regardless of their differences is a critical cornerstone of our beliefs and values. Recent words of condemnation from some in our province against those who may identify within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community go against these shared beliefs and values of acceptance and inclusion. We expect there to be protests and counter-protests across the province today, with one planned for the BC Legislature.

We remain committed, visible and vocal in support of all students and staff who make our district diverse and welcoming. We are focused on emphasizing and maintaining a safe and positive environment free from discrimination, harassment and intimidation for all students, employees and community members regardless of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity as outlined in our [Administrative Procedure 176 – Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity](#). Our district is part of the Provincial K-12 SOGI Collaborative that works together to ensure that our schools are safe places, that *“every student is to be accepted the way they are”*, and providing the resources to support teachers in the work that they do. [SOGI 123](#) is a provincially approved site available to all teachers in support of this important work of inclusion. I wrote a recent blog post on SOGI and some of the startling statistics of harm for those who identify within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. If you are interested in reading it, you can find it here: [Painting a Picture with Numbers](#) .

The Premier has written a recent letter in support of SOGI and the critical importance of schools being safe and inclusive places for everyone. Our roles in public education are critical. We stand together to ensure that all students, families and staff feel safe, a sense of belonging and valued in the Saanich School District.

With respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Eberwein", with a horizontal line underneath.

Dave Eberwein
Superintendent of Schools

DE/klg