

Dear Mr. Langstraat,

RE: Composition of 23 Divisions for Macaulay Elementary, 2017-2018 School Year

We, the teaching staff of Ecole Macaulay Elementary, call upon the School District 61 and the Province of British Columbia to make their "Best Effort" for the children of Esquimalt. Please, allow us to create classrooms with compositions in which children can learn!

According to the staffing package our administrators received as of [May 5th](#), our Grade 4 and Grade 5 students on the English track would be in four divisions at the "floor" of 20 students in each, with 5 or 6 children with designations representing serious learning challenges in EACH class. Furthermore, the planned class size for French Immersion Grade 4 is to have two 3-4 split classes with only 4 grade 4s in each class, and then a Grade 4 class of 28 with 3 severe designations.

Not only do these classroom compositions not comply with 2 per classroom and immediately incur "remedy," it fails to show the whole picture: not only do we have 22 designated students at the Grade 4 and 5 level on the English track alone; in our entire school, 50% of all children are reading below grade level.\*\*

Reading level is only one area many children struggle with. Significant numbers of our students are dealing with various kinds of emotional trauma, making our classrooms extremely complex and often barely manageable.

And this is not just an issue for the students in the English track at Macaulay, the French Immersion students face similar challenges in reading.\*\* In addition, because there is an extremely large number of children in the English track who have

learning challenges, children in French Immersion don't get tested for learning disability until Grade 4 at the earliest.

As a staff, we are concerned that "remedies" of team-teaching or job-sharing will not be as effective as honouring the promise to make a "best effort" to have 2 children or fewer with special needs per classroom. Many children in our school population are vulnerable and need to create a strong attachment with their teacher. Creating that bond of trust is best done in a classroom where composition follows contract guidelines. For that reason, we strongly recommend reopening Lampson School and other schools, and redrawing catchment borders.

The existing staffing package in no way honours the children of Macaulay School and the province's promise to make a best effort to have 2 or fewer children with special needs in each classroom. In addition to the classrooms that we already know will incur "remedy," every year at Macaulay we enroll a number of new, undiagnosed Kindergarten students who require regular or constant one-on-one support from support staff in addition to huge amounts of teacher time. These are children who do not "fit" in general models of a classroom.

The physical size of Macaulay can only realistically house a maximum of 20 divisions of children with the diverse composition our school population presents. Our new computer lab was completed through budget monies shunted from other programs and given from the PAC, it is slated to be disassembled to make room for a classroom. 20 or fewer divisions at our school leaves room for preparation time, space for learning assistance, space for Aboriginal student programming, a decent amount of gym time for each division, a computer lab that allows teachers to use their own classroom to prepare lessons.

This means that almost 80 children need to be taught in a different school. This is not our problem to fix. We, the teaching staff of Macaulay School, did not create this problem.

Because of the complex nature of our student's social dynamics and learning needs, we are likely to participate in building the classes for next year. In no way should you interpret this as our agreeing that the compositions that contravene restored

contract language are in the best interests of our students. We do not believe that School District 61 is making a "Best Effort" to support the complex learning needs of the children of Macaulay School.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We eagerly await your response.

Yours Truly,

Macaulay Staff