



## VICTORIA & ESQUIMALT POLICE BOARD

November 13, 2024

Nicole Duncan  
Chair, Board of Education

*Via Email*

Dear Nicole:

### **RE: School District 61 (SD61) Board of Education Request for Information**

The Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board has reviewed the written request from School District 61's Board of Education, dated May 28, 2024. The request seeks insight into youth-related gang activity and police involvement in schools. This report will address key items directly related to the mandate of the Analysis & Intelligence Section (AIS) and the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST). These items include data on gang activity and police calls to SD61 schools, along with qualitative observations from the MYST team regarding the current climate in the schools.

### **Data and Findings**

#### **1. Gang Recruitment and Criminal Activity Involving Youth (2015 to Date)**

Most information related to gang recruitment and criminal activity is classified, due to its sensitive nature. AIS holds intelligence derived from covert operations, victim statements, and other confidential sources that cannot be disclosed. However, we can confirm that gang members have been observed associating with school-aged youth within SD61, and arrests have been made that confirm the involvement of youth in criminal activities. In a 2024 VicPD investigation, police officers observed gang members in the vicinity of SD61 schools associating with school-aged youth. One gang member was later arrested within meters of a SD61 school, and the evidence located during the arrest confirmed criminal activity connected with school children.

Aside from the above sources of information, officers may create files and document gang-related information in PRIME as "Intelligence – Gang Info." These files are not specific to activity involving schools and are used to document all interactions with individuals associated with gang activity. An AIS crime analyst compiled the available data in relation to these intelligence files as shown in the table below (PRIME Gang Intelligence Files).

Prime Gang Intelligence Files	
Year	Files
2015	16
2016	19
2017	11
2018	10
2019	24
2020	12
2021	12
2022	13
2023	21
2024*	11

\*January 1st to July 22nd 2024

## 2. Police Calls to SD61 Schools (2015 to Date)

AIS compiled data on police calls for service to middle and high schools within SD61. A detailed breakdown of police calls per school is available in Appendix A (Police Calls for Service to Victoria Schools).

## 3. Vulnerable Policy and Procedure

With respect to any and all Victoria Police policies and procedures related to vulnerable populations (including Youth), the VicPD policy analyst has provided thirteen (13) policies that match the criteria requested. These policies are attached in Appendix B. Any redactions applied were for operational reasons.

## Insights from the MYST Team

The Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) has closely worked with school administrations and students in SD61. Below is a summary of their key observations:

- Underreporting of Issues:** MYST has observed delayed and underreporting of both potential crimes and actual criminal offenses. Conversations with school staff and students confirm that many incidents go unreported due to fear of retaliation from other youth or distrust of police involvement.
- Impact of School Liaison Officers:** Many students, particularly those involved in gangs, have expressed that the presence of a School Liaison Officer (SLO) could have helped them avoid gang involvement. The absence of a familiar police figure within the schools deprives students of a resource they could turn to in times of need.
- Student, Staff, and Parent Feedback:** During school presentations, MYST consistently receives reports of bullying, online threats, weapons possession, drug dealing, assaults, and general feelings of insecurity within school environments. This reinforces the need for a consistent police presence to establish trust and prevent concerning situations regarding safety from escalating.
- Perceptions of Police:** There is a growing trend where students fear police, a perception that has been shaped by social messaging. This is particularly concerning given the rising levels of

anxiety and depression among youth. Police presence in schools could play a vital role in countering this narrative and building trust.

- **Vulnerable Youth and Newcomers:** Newcomers to the community, many of whom have fled unsafe environments, are often prime targets for gang recruitment. Positive relationships with police could provide these vulnerable youth with the support and security they need to resist such influences.
- **Community Perspectives:** Contrary to some public perceptions, both Black and Indigenous communities within SD61 have communicated that they view police presence in schools as an opportunity to foster positive relationships, build capacity, and offer youth healthier choices.

### Conclusion

This report has highlighted both statistical and qualitative insights into the gang-related activities and policing challenges in SD61 schools. While statistical data provides a glimpse into the patterns of criminal activity and police callouts, the qualitative observations from the MYST team offer crucial context about the real challenges faced by students, staff, and police agencies. We recommend that our data be considered in context, and in conjunction with, the Worrysome Online Behaviour (WOB) reports provided monthly to SD61 by Safer Schools Together.

Addressing these issues requires a balanced approach that includes reintroducing trusted police figures in schools, fostering positive relationships, and creating an environment where youth feel safe reporting criminal activity. The Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board remains committed to supporting SD61 and working collaboratively to create safer school environments.

Sincerely,



Micayla Hayes, Chair  
Victoria & Esquimalt Police Board

Encl.

Appendix A

Police Calls for Service to Victoria Schools 2015-2024 YTD*												
[24/7, 365 & By Civic Address]												
Count of Calls By Address	Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*	Grand Total
<b>Schools</b>	▼	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*	Grand Total
<b>Elementary Schools</b>		110	86	104	107	111	121	99	116	104	56	1014
- George Jay Elementary		13	8	22	23	21	16	20	44	24	6	197
Assist		2	4	6	12	6	2	7	6	8	1	54
Other		3	1	6	6	4	1	4	9	7	1	42
Property		2	1					2	1	5	2	14
Social Order		5	1	9	4	7	10	7	22	5	3	73
Traffic		1	1	1	2							5
Violence		1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1		9
- James Bay Community School		33	14	11	6	6	15	16	12	8	4	125
Assist		6	6	3	4	1	3	4	1	4		32
Other		1	2	4	1	1	5	6	7	2		29
Property		3	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1		13
Social Order		22	2	3	1	1	4	2	4	1	2	42
Traffic		1						2				3
Violence		1	2			1	1	2				6
- Macaulay Elementary		8	8	15	18	14	5	13	8	8	13	110
Assist		4	3	1	4	3	2	3	3	3		26
Other		2	2	8	7	7	1	7	4	2	6	46
Property		1		1	1	1		1				5
Social Order		1	2	3	2	2	3	2		2	2	19
Traffic			1	1	1			1	1	1		5
Violence		1	1	4	1						2	9
- Margaret Jenkins Elementary		2	6	4	5	12	12	9	6	2	1	59
Assist		1	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	1		11
Other		1	1	1	2	7	5	1	1		1	18
Property		1	1	1	2	1	2		1			8
Social Order		1	2		1	6	2					12
Traffic			1		1		2	4				8
Violence					1		1					2
- Oaklands Elementary		13	10	11	14	13	14	9	12	22	10	128
Assist		4	5	6	3	5	1	3	1	3	4	35
Other		7	3	5	6	5	4	5	5	9	4	53
Property		1			3	5		1	6	1		17
Social Order		1	1		1	1	3	1	3	4	1	15
Traffic		1			1							2
Violence		1	1		1	1	1					6
- Quadra Elementary		7	14	13	15	13	21	7	18	14	10	132
Assist		4	6	6	5	1	4	1	5	3	3	38
Other		1	2	6	2	2	4	4	6	3	7	37
Property		1				2	4		1	2		10
Social Order		1	3	1	6	4	6	1	1	2		25
Traffic		1	2		4	1						10
Violence		1	2		2	2	1	3	4			12
- Sir James Douglas Elementan		6	9	2	6	8	9	4	2	7	5	60
Assist		1	6	1	2	3	1	1	1	2		15
Other		1	2	1	2	3	3	2			1	15
Property					1	1	1	1	1			6
Social Order		4	1		5	1	3			4	2	20
Traffic					1	1						2
Violence										1	1	2
- South Park Family School		12	3	5	8	12	19	4	2	9	1	75
Assist		4	1	4	6	3	1	1	4			24
Other		2	1	1	2	5	1		1			12
Property		2	1	1	3	7	1					16
Social Order		3	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	1		15
Traffic			1							1		2
Violence		1		1	1		1	1	2	1		6
- Sundance-Bank Elementary						1	2	7		3	2	15
Assist						1						1
Other								4		1	1	6
Property										1	1	2
Social Order						2	3	1				6
- Victor School		4	5	6	4	6	2	3	4	4	3	43
Assist		2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	13
Other		2	2	5	1	4	1		2	2		17
Property		1	1	2	1	1	2		1			8
Social Order		2	1					1	1			5
- Victoria West Elementary		12	9	15	6	5	6	5	8	3	1	70
Assist		4	2	5	1	1	2	3	1	1		19
Other		3	3	3	1	2	1	2	1	1		17
Property					1	1						2
Social Order		4	3	4	1	2	3		5	1	1	24
Traffic		1	1	2								4
Violence				1	2				1			4
- High Schools		138	115	131	102	101	77	73	59	64	44	904
- Esquimalt High School		33	39	42	26	15	31	31	25	17	12	271
Assist		11	9	9	5	3	7	8	6	6	4	68
Other		8	10	17	10	7	8	10	3	6	3	82
Property		7	4	4	4	2	6	2	3	1	3	32
Social Order		11	8	11	4	1	6	2	4	1	2	50
Traffic		3	1		2		2	2	1	1		7
Violence		3	4	1	3	2	2	2	7	8	2	32
- SJ Burnside Continuing Ed						14	8	17	11	11	4	65
Assist						2	2	3	2	4	1	14
Other						4	4	5	2	3	1	19
Property						4	5	1	4			14
Social Order						4	2	1	4	2		13
Violence								3	2			5
- SJ Willis		50	47	36	28	29	1				16	207
Assist		13	9	11	4	4						43
Other		6	6	6	5	6						29
Property		5	5	3	1	5					1	20
Social Order		25	24	13	16	12	1				13	104
Traffic			2	2		1						5
Violence		1	1	1	2	1						6
- Victoria High School		55	29	53	48	43	37	25	23	36	12	361
Assist		12	7	17	7	14	4	4	2	3	3	73
Other		4	4	14	8	7	8	7	4	9	4	69
Property		7	4	2	10	6	12	4	3	5		55
Social Order		29	10	15	19	7	9	9	10	15	3	126
Traffic		2			1				1			4
Violence		3	2	5	4	8	4	1	1	4	2	34
- Middle Schools		42	37	40	39	44	18	30	33	20	13	316
- Central Middle School		25	26	24	22	27	10	21	21	19	11	206
Assist		6	3	6	6	14	3	5	1	5	2	51
Other		6	2	8	9	3		6	8	3	1	46
Property		4	8	3	2	1	4	3	2	4	3	34
Social Order		7	13	6	2	4	1	4	7	6	4	54
Traffic								1				2
Violence		2		1	3	4	2	3	2	1	1	19
- Rockheights Middle School		17	11	16	17	17	8	9	12	1	2	110
Assist		3	2	5	14	4	2	3	1		1	35
Other		7	3	4	1	7	4	1	6	1		34
Property		3	1	4		1		2				11
Social Order		3	3	3	1			1	1	1		12
Traffic		1					1					3
Violence			2		1	5	1	2	3		1	15
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>290</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>2234</b>

## Analyst notes:

-YTD = Jan 1st – July 22nd, 2024.

-Data is captured 24/7, 365 days a year (excluding 2024), i.e., is captured both when school is out and when school is in.

-There is no data for SJ Willis between 2020 and April 2024. This was Vic High's temporary location during renovation. Calls for service at this location, during this period, are found under Victoria High School. The rest of Vic High's data reflects calls for service at Grant St.

## Appendix B

1. AA120 Unbiased Policing (Page 6)
2. AC230 Fair and Impartial Policing (Page 12)
3. OB050 Protection of Children and Families (Page 16)
4. OB120 Mental Health and Substance Use (Page 18)
5. OB180 Missing Persons\_Redacted (Page 30)
6. OB305 Hate Crimes\_Incidents\_Redacted (Page 46)
7. OD120 Searches\_Redacted (Page 51)
8. OD180 Young Persons (Page 79)
9. OD200 Victim Services Policy (Page 82)
10. OJ100 Jail Operations and Prisoner Care\_Redacted (Page 88)
11. OK010 Interpreters and Translators (Page 151)
12. OK185 Safe Access to Schools\_draft (Page 155)
13. OM030 School Liaison\_draft (Page 161)