

**From:** [Karen Matthews](#)  
**To:** [Karen Matthews](#)  
**Subject:** B Stime: SLOs and their lethal weapons on SD68 campuses  
**Date:** April 13, 2023 8:32:13 AM

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**From:** Bjorn Stime <>  
**Sent:** April 3, 2023 4:30 PM  
**To:** Charlene Mckay <[Charlene.Mckay@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Charlene.Mckay@sd68.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** SLOs and their lethal weapons on SD68 campuses

**CAUTION:** External Message

Hi Charlene,

I have had very encouraging email conversations with you (and with Jessica Stanley) in the past, particularly one regarding RCMP in schools and another about navigating bold decolonial action on the part of the SD68 Board of Trustees.

I write to you again to raise to you a concern and then a proposal. But first some background.

Recently I have had correspondence with both the school district superintendent, Scott Saywell, and the superintendent of the Nanaimo branch of the RCMP, Lisa Fletcher. I had raised my concern with my children's school principal, Mme. Christine Bohm, that RCMP officers were entering school property while carrying lethal weapons on supposedly "friendly" visits, visits that were by no means carried out in response to any emergency situation. These include routine visits from visibly armed School Liaison Officers through their School Liaison Officer Program, as well as a visit to a science fair by a fully armed parent who was working as an RCMP officer but did not leave his weapons behind at the RCMP office.

I have, in my first communication to you, voiced support for the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District to sever ties with the RCMP, just as other school districts in BC have done. Having sensed that this school district may not be ready for that degree of action, and having seen no visible step taken by the Board in this direction, I have taken a step back to say, *'Ok, let's put the conversation about severing ties on the shelf for the moment. But in the meantime, let's at least prohibit lethal weapons from being carried by RCMP into the schools on friendly visits.'* This had been intended as a much smaller and less-complex request, a request that is thus presumably much more viable to take action on, and one that attends very pointedly to one of the primary concerns about RCMP officers in schools, which is the unnecessary presence of their lethal weapons on campus on occasions when their purpose on campus does not – or at least ought not to - involve force or any type of coercion implied by the presence of lethal weapons as an 'option'.

As you will see in a PDF of the compiled email exchange (which I can send at your request), the school principal has indicated that she does not have the authority to prohibit RCMP officers from carrying lethal weapons on friendly visits to my children's school specifically; the RCMP branch superintendent has provided a superficial rationale for their *status quo* practice of carrying weapons onto school campuses in our district but with no references to any specific legislation supporting her claims; and the school district superintendent has indicated that he accepts, for the school district, the RCMP's rationale that they must carry all of their 'options', including their lethal weapons, at any time they are in the 'public domain' including friendly visits to schools.

The concern I raise to you now, as the SD68 Board of Trustees, is that RCMP officers are continuing to carry lethal weapons onto SD68 school campuses when entering those campuses in various so-called friendly capacities, not just when responding to a supposed threat. RCMP

officers are not exceptional human beings in the sense of being exempt from human error, nor are they always in full control of their own emotions. I would contend that most parents agree that lethal weapons should be kept out of our otherwise relatively safe, non-coercive, school learning environments as much as possible.

I propose that the SD68 School Board move to restrict RCMP officers from carrying lethal weapons onto school campuses in our school district when they are making any kind of 'friendly' visits. These friendly visits include but are not limited to: visits by School Liaison Officers, visits to children's events by parents who are on duty as RCMP officers, and career day events. If the Nanaimo RCMP branch continues to not be amenable to leaving all lethal weapons behind on friendly visits to schools in our district, then I would propose ending the armed SLO programs and then looking for non-RCMP alternatives to fill any gaps.

I look forward to further communication with you on this matter. I have also reached out to the BC Human Rights Commissioner, Kasari Govender, who is engaged in the matter of SLO programs in BC. Commissioner Govender has, in recent months, sent a letter to School Trustees throughout BC strongly recommending them to "end the use of SLOs until the impact of these programs can be established empirically," in each of the Trustees' jurisdictions in BC. Even if SD#68 is not politically able to end the SLO programs in our district I hope that this proposal to prohibit lethal weapons on friendly RCMP visits to school campuses offers a politically feasible option that will address at least some of the concern that parents and students have with the SLO programs.

I encourage the Nanaimo and Ladysmith School District's Board of Trustees to engage on this matter and take action.

Sincerely,

Bjorn Eng Stime, MPH, PhD

Parent of children in SD #68

Nanaimo, BC

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