

## Karen Matthews

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**To:** Karen Matthews  
**Subject:** FW: Student Barriers

**From:** Angela Pounds

**Sent:** September 30, 2020 8:41 AM

**To:** Charlene Mckay <[Charlene.Mckay@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Charlene.Mckay@sd68.bc.ca)>; Greg Keller <[Greg.Keller@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Greg.Keller@sd68.bc.ca)>; Lisa Marie Barron <[LisaMarie.Barron@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:LisaMarie.Barron@sd68.bc.ca)>; Jessica Stanley <[Jessica.Stanley@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Jessica.Stanley@sd68.bc.ca)>; Chantel O'Neill <[Chantel.Oneill@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Chantel.Oneill@sd68.bc.ca)>; Elaine Wilkinson <[Elaine.Wilkinson@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Elaine.Wilkinson@sd68.bc.ca)>; Tania Brzovic <[Tania.Brzovic@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Tania.Brzovic@sd68.bc.ca)>; Stephanie Higginson <[Stephanie.Higginson@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Stephanie.Higginson@sd68.bc.ca)>; Bill Robinson <[Bill.Robinson@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Bill.Robinson@sd68.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Student Barriers

**CAUTION: External Message**

My daughter told me her friend has not attended school this week because she does not have a bus pass issued to her. This is a grade 8 student from Gabriola student with no other way to get to school has missed three days of school because the bus driver will not let her on the bus. Her family has always struggled with these kinds of tasks, and it is very frustrating that so many barriers are put in her way. Her parents have a challenging life already and the fact that they are overwhelmed should not be a 12 years old's problem. I would ask you consider how unnecessary this situation is, the zpass system has a negative effect on vulnerable children, I know this is not the only student facing this barrier. I wrote a letter to the board when the z-pass was first instated raising concerns about the negative effect it may have on vulnerable children.

Gabriola has a 39% child poverty rate, while Nanaimo's rate is 23%, this is a significant difference, the students who live on Gabriola Island are marginalized and face many barriers. Gabriola residents have high mental health needs as well. You can see the recently published Gabriola Health report for more information here <https://www.ghcs.ca/2020-Gabriola-Health-Report.pdf>

I do not think it's acceptable for bus drivers to block students from going to school, a different process should be developed- the main goal should be to get the student into the school every day then sort out the details.

I am so frustrated with the hurdles this child and likely many others are expected to navigate without parental support, even getting herself a math book is an overwhelming task for a child going to a brand-new school in a new community, especially this year during a global pandemic. Why aren't all the children given the book on the first day and leave it up to the parent to pay or not. Not all families have credit cards and the school cash online system is not functional for them, NDSS would not accept cash and I am unsure how families without credit cards could have paid for their children.

There are so many steps for families at the start of the school year, I would strongly suggest the school board really consider how many are actually benefiting children rather than administrators and how it can be seriously impacting vulnerable and marginalized children.

*Angela Pounds* She | Her  
Gabriola Island