

From: [Karen Matthews](#)
To: [Karen Matthews](#)
Subject: FW: Unacceptable Graduation Plan
Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 9:29:42 AM

From: Denise Fraser < >

Sent: May 24, 2021 8:15 PM

To: HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca; educ.minister@gov.bc.ca; jennifer.whiteside.MLA@leg.bc.ca; dm.education@gov.bc.ca; sheila.malcolmson.MLA@leg.bc.ca; Ricki Bartlett <rbartlett@sd68.bc.ca>; Shawn Shahi <Shawn.Shahi@sd68.bc.ca>; Stephen Epp <sepp@sd68.bc.ca>; Charlene Mckay <Charlene.Mckay@sd68.bc.ca>; Greg Keller <Greg.Keller@sd68.bc.ca>; Lisa Marie Barron <LisaMarie.Barron@sd68.bc.ca>; Jessica Stanley <Jessica.Stanley@sd68.bc.ca>; Chantel O'Neill <Chantel.Oneill@sd68.bc.ca>; Elaine Wilkinson <Elaine.Wilkinson@sd68.bc.ca>; Tania Brzovic <Tania.Brzovic@sd68.bc.ca>; Stephanie Higginson <Stephanie.Higginson@sd68.bc.ca>; Bill Robinson <Bill.Robinson@sd68.bc.ca>; Deputy Superintendent <DeputySuperintendent@sd68.bc.ca>; asstsuperintendent@sd68.bc.ca; Scott Saywell <ssaywell@sd68.bc.ca>

Subject: Unacceptable Graduation Plan

CAUTION: External Message

Hello,

I'm writing this email in disbelief. I can't believe that School District 68 has a chance to give the Graduating Class of 2021 **ONE** event that they can celebrate together and they have decided not to bother. The plan for the Graduation Ceremony that was sent on Friday, May 23, 2021 is a disgrace and shows that the school administrators of Nanaimo District Secondary School (NDSS) and the officials at the School District 68 office have not given any thought into the mental health and overall wellbeing of the students. I have never been so disappointed with the educational system in Nanaimo.

Students and parents of NDSS submitted a proposed outdoor graduation ceremony to be held on the turf field behind NDSS. It took over 21/2 weeks for an administrator to reply to my email and that was only after I sent another email. There was NO explanation why this was not an option.

The administrators of NDSS have stayed in their offices all year and have not engaged with the students. My daughter and her friends, who don't get in trouble and attend school daily, would not even recognize any of the school administrators if they ran into them. The principal has been there for almost 2 years and the vice principals about a year, yet the students don't recognize them. The school administrators and the personnel from the District Office have done nothing to help and support the students and especially the grade 12 students. They have dumped this responsibility onto the teachers, counsellors, office staff and Child and Family Support workers, who have all done an amazing job this year.

The school administrators and district office personnel are sweeping the school year under the carpet and ignoring the students. This is unacceptable and they are doing the bare minimum for a Graduation Ceremony.

The graduating class of 2021 have had 15 months of restrictions and School District 68 have had 15 months to plan a fitting graduation ceremony. NDSS emailed the graduation plan out 4 days before we all know that the restrictions are being lifted and things are opening up again on May 25, 2021. This shows that School District 68 doesn't even know what is going on in their own community and province. The School Trustees also plan a role in that students have been left out and ignored by the school administrators and the district office.

The majority of the school administrators and officials at the District office already had their child go through a Graduation Ceremony or their child is not of graduating age. They don't have a vested interest in trying to give the students one event as a class. The plan that is given by NDSS isolates students further and will last at most 10 minutes. The graduate has a 10 minute time slot and limit of 4 guests. There are some students who will not have a parents show up for their graduations, for a number of reasons, and this will have a negative impact on the graduates.

The graduating class of 2021 have had nothing all year, no field trips, no assemblies, no Dry Grad, no Prom and because School District 68 is not willing to do anything, the graduating class will not have a graduation ceremony as a class.

I will never forget the look on my daughter's face when I told her what NDSS was doing for the graduation ceremony. It was a look of disappointment, being defeated and a big letdown. This is just another thing that they have not done this year.

I'm asking Minister Jennifer Whiteside, do you care about the mental health of our children? There is no reason why schools can't have an outdoor graduation ceremony as part of the school day. The students have been in a classroom with poor ventilation with 30 other students and a number of adults in a building with over 1000 other people for over 6 hours a day. If the school is afraid of rain on graduation day, then have it at a local arena. It would be big enough for all the graduates to sit 6 feet apart and the event can be live streamed to the parents. All the schools could use the same venue. Graduation is for the graduates, not for the adults in charge of the event to take the easy way out and ignore them. I'm asking you, Minister Whiteside to tell Superintendent Scott Saywell of School Districts 68 to get off his chair and start making plans so the graduates can have a real graduation. They are NOT doing their jobs, they are hiding in their offices and doing the bare minimum. Will you do your job?

Some of you may feel this email is harsh, well at times the truth hurts. What I've written is the truth, the graduates have had nothing all year and School District 68 is taking the easy way out and ignoring the mental health and the overall wellbeing of the youth. They have taken last year's graduation plan and simply changed the dates. I found out that a secondary school in Burnaby (which is in Fraser Health Authority and has a higher Covid-19 transmission rate than Nanaimo) has been given permission to have a graduation ceremony with 100 people in attendance at a time, including guest in their own gym. Why is there such a big difference between the schools, simply put because the administrators in Burnaby care and the people in School District 68 DON'T CARE.

If anyone is going to reply to my email, please provide me with a real response and not a generic one, which I received from a school trustee and a school administrator.

Regards,

Denise Fraser
(parent of a graduate at NDSS)

PS I would also like to know where the student fees, that I paid for my daughter in September, have been used? Where did the student fees go?

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