

PUBLIC DELEGATION BOARD MEETING

AGENDA

Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 5:00 to 7:00 pm
In the Boardroom
VSB Education Centre

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1.1 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

1.2 OPENING REMARKS

2. DELEGATIONS RE: DRAFT 2025-2026 FINANCIAL PLAN

Delegations are estimated to begin approximately at 5:00 PM.

2.1 Delegations

- 2.1.1 Amy Mo
- 2.1.2 Chris Abrams
- 2.1.3 Tanya Kyi
- 2.1.4 Omar Tahmiscic, Emily Carr Elementary School PAC (Active Transportation Council)
- 2.1.5 Connie Hubbs
- 2.1.6 Jennie Milligan, Our Kids Vancouver
- 2.1.7 Kimberly Balfour
- 2.1.8 Tomomi Suzuki
- 2.1.9 Sabina Beesley
- 2.1.10 Angela Waterlow, Emily Carr Elementary School PAC
- 2.1.11 Kimberly Kirsch, Tillicum Elementary School PAC
- 2.1.12 Elizabeth Jackman
- 2.1.13 Maryn Wallace
- 2.1.14 Sherry Breshears
- 2.1.15 Linda Kemp
- 2.1.16 Joanne Carman

3. ADJOURNMENT

Good evening trustees.

My name is Amy Mo. I'm a Grade 12 student at Point Grey Mini School, the founder and president of our school's debate team, and thank you so much for welcoming my comments tonight.

In high school, debate was a huge part of my life. It taught me how to ask hard questions, research deeply, and defend truth with clarity. But as I searched for evidence, I started seeing more and more content that felt off — AI-generated articles, fake statistics, things that looked real but weren't.

It was disorienting — until I turned to the one place that's always grounded me: **the school library**.

That's where I learned how to verify, question, and think critically — not just for debate, but for life. With that foundation, I've had the privilege of leading teams and winning at the national level. But more importantly, I saw firsthand how urgent the fight for truth has become.

That experience inspired my capstone project: an investigation into how AI is reshaping our information landscape — and how libraries can help students meet that challenge with confidence and clarity.

But before we talk about solutions, we need to clearly understand the problem we're facing.

Artificial Intelligence has quietly become part of our everyday lives — from spam filters to virtual assistants to content recommendation algorithms. But beyond convenience, it's also being used to generate misinformation at scale.

With tools like **machine learning** and **natural language processing**, AI can now create human-like conversations, fake news articles, and even impersonations. These bots and systems can flood online platforms with convincing content that's hard to detect — making it more difficult than ever to know what's real and what isn't.

And the most visible — and dangerous — example? **Deepfakes**.

Professor Ethan Mollick from the Wharton School recently demonstrated just how easy it is to create a convincing deepfake. Using only basic tools, he generated a realistic video of himself — complete with facial expressions and voice — in under eight minutes, for just \$11. What once required teams of experts and advanced equipment now takes a few clicks.

That's what makes this so concerning: the technology is no longer confined to experts or large institutions — it's now in the hands of the general public, including those who may use it to deceive.

Cognitive scientist Gary Marcus warns that AI can now produce **misinformation at scale**, overwhelming public platforms with fake content faster than we can respond. Researchers have called this the “firehose of falsehood” — a strategy where endless streams of partial truths and outright fabrications are released so rapidly and widely that they drown out what's real.

But here's where I believe we have hope: **education**.

While policymakers are still catching up, schools have the power to act *now* — by equipping students with the tools to navigate this world with clarity and confidence.

But traditional media literacy isn't enough anymore. We need a modernized approach — one that:

- Teaches students to think in **probabilistic** terms: *Could this be true? Could it be false?*
- Helps us engage with **uncertainty** rather than avoid it
- Breaks down how **disinformation campaigns** operate — who creates them, and why
- And provides access to real **verification tools** that help us ask better questions and reach informed conclusions

And where is the best place to lead this kind of learning?

Our school libraries.

Libraries are not just study spaces — they are **launchpads for critical thinking**.

They offer trusted resources, supportive environments, and teacher-librarians trained to guide inquiry, foster digital literacy, and help students develop the discernment they need in an AI-driven world.

Because when falsehood becomes easy, teaching students how to think critically, verify information, and recognize manipulation becomes essential. This isn't just about literacy — it's about **resilience in a rapidly changing world**.

With the right support, libraries can run **AI and media literacy workshops** that teach students how to spot deepfakes, trace sources, and use fact-checking tools. They can work alongside teachers — especially in subjects like English, Social Studies, and Career Education — to embed digital literacy into everyday learning. Libraries can also host **student panels, inquiry projects, and public talks** that encourage learners to question media rather than passively consume it. And by curating up-to-date, accessible resources, they help students navigate everything from misinformation to how algorithms shape what we see.

When libraries are funded as active, interdisciplinary spaces, they become more than a quiet corner — they become a **school-wide engine for truth, inquiry, and digital citizenship**.

So tonight, I encourage you to consider this:

Support our school libraries not just as places to borrow books, but as spaces that shape how we think, question, and understand the world.

Ensure every student has access to a full-time teacher-librarian — someone who can teach the skills that no algorithm ever could: curiosity, discernment, and ethical thinking.

And invest in programs that empower students to ask better questions, assess information with care, and engage with complexity rather than avoid it.

Because in a time when AI can generate anything, what matters most is teaching students how to recognize what's real.

Let's increase the budget for libraries helping foster our students to become informed, thoughtful, and resilient citizens.

Thank you for listening — and for believing that education is not just about keeping up with the future but shaping it with integrity.

Dear Ms. Jung, Ms. Fraser, Ms. Chan-Pedley, Mr. Chien, Ms. Faridkot, Mr. Zhang, Ms. Mah, Ms. Reddy, Mr. Richardson, and Ms. Yu,

My name is Christine Abrams. I am a parent of a student who has gone to school at VSB schools now for almost nine years.

In his first year, his kindergarten year (2016), the VSB, in their infinite wisdom (*sarcasm*) decided to stop all elementary school music programs. Their stated reason? To study the more equitable delivery of music education at the elementary level in VSB schools.

On Sept. 22, 2021, I spoke at a VSB School Board Meeting on this topic via Zoom. I spoke about the science. I spoke about the students needing education that enriched not just their bodies and their minds, but their souls.

I don't feel like repeating the science studies on the benefits of music education. They are multitudinous and have been around for forever. If anyone wants receipts on that, please feel free to email or call me.

I don't feel like repeating my plea for the education of students' souls. I'm not entirely sure you care much about their souls.

This last October I was privileged to get to attend the BC Music Educators Association Conference in Richmond. There, at lunch, I was bemoaning the reality of having no elementary music programs in the VSB. One of my colleagues at my table piped up that I was wrong, that he and his wife both taught music at elementary schools in the VSB. I was shocked. Where? How?

Apparently the "equitable" solution was to go back to some schools and students having access and others not so much? Apparently it's still up to each school to decide what subjects will be offered as prep coverage and if they choose to have a PE specialist or some other specialist, so much for the students at that school having access to a well-rounded music education?

The only way to make it equitable is to table legislation at the school board level that every elementary school needs to have a music specialist for at least some of the eight years they spend in those schools.

My son's currently in Gr. 8 at a VSB high school. Do you know how much music he's allowed to take in Gr. 8? 1/4 of a semester - 2.5 months. Have you ever tried to learn a musical instrument? If you study it for 2.5 months and then don't pick it up again for a year, how much of a passion do you think will be ignited by that? The students in his class, almost all of whom have had a barren wasteland of music education in their elementary schools, can't even make a simple beat pattern.

I am a strong believer that ALL problems have solutions if people will just open their minds to new/different possibilities. There are solutions to the problems of the equitable delivery of music education in the elementary schools and the craziness of trying to learn anything that requires sustained practice/focus in a 1/4 of a semester at secondary levels within the Vancouver School Board. Other districts have found workable solutions.

Look around at your own schools. Look around the Lower Mainland. Look around Canada. Look around the world. Find the solutions. Don't accept the status quo as something we can't fix. Please.

Sincerely,
Chris Abrams