



BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 28, 2022

Trigger warning: Sexual Assault

To all students, parents, caregivers and staff,

At this week's meeting of the Board of Education, a student representative from the SEAS Club (Safety Education Advocacy and Supports) at New Westminster Secondary School attended and spoke at one of the public portions of our meeting, within the context of providing an update about the work they've been engaged in and framing some of their goals moving forward.

To provide context, the SEAS Club (formally the Safety in Schools/SIS Club) was brought together last year as part of the coordinated efforts to respond to student-led activism that brought to light concerns about patterns of sexual harassment and assaults that were impacting students and their sense of safety. While we know these systemic experiences are not limited to one school or one district, they were and are troubling to hear.

Appropriately, these concerns were taken seriously by the Board, by District staff and by leadership and staff at the school. School administrators have continued to work with staff and students to address immediate needs (and with other stakeholders, where appropriate) and have worked to create educational opportunities to address the attitudes and patterns that can lead to harassment and assault – including but not limited to staff workshops, high profile guest speakers for students, and peer-to-peer engagement around these issues.

We heard that some students are disappointed by the pace of this work and are looking for renewed engagement from administration. That is valuable feedback for us as a Board to hear, so we can help to ensure that student safety and needs are being appropriately met.

However, comments received from students and staff regarding the pace of this work and the need for renewed engagement from administration are being reviewed and addressed. The Board will continue to work with the school and the community to ensure that student safety and needs are being appropriately met.

conversations are happening, not only with appropriate supports in place for the students, but also with staff who are empowered to evaluate options and take additional action, if that should be required.

Associate