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Speaking Across Barriers 2022
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Informed Consent Letter for
Members of the SD62 Board of Trustees
(Knowledge-Sharing Session)

Project Title Speaking Across Barriers: How Parents in a Canadian Public School System Learn About Their Children's Diversity Education
HREB Application #22-0136

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Research Purpose and Goals

Through conducting this research, my (Renken-Sebastian's) goals are to:

- Learn about the methods by which the leadership within a public school district communicates with parents, guardians, and caregivers about their strategic plan objectives;

- Discover how parents, guardians, and caregivers find out what their children are learning in public schools that is related to the concepts of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA);
- Provide recommendations on how school communities can continue to foster clear lines of communication about the progress they are making on their strategic planning objectives; and ultimately,
- Ensure that Canadian public school students are more likely to develop empathy and understanding for people who hold different beliefs and values than their own.

Research Importance

In Canada, education is a public good through which a provincial government can care for its people. For residents in British Columbia, part of this care is evidenced through how students learn how to interact with people in their community who may not share their social qualities such as ethnicity, gender or sexuality, chronic medical or mental health conditions, and/or type of neurodiversity. As such, the monitoring of the progress made regarding the encouragement of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) principles in B.C. public school districts is a pressing concern.

One of the tools which school districts use to ensure that they are continuing to provide education that is inclusive of, diverse, equitable, and accessible to all the different kinds of learners in a district is a multi-year strategic plan. However, a strategic plan can only be effective if everyone who is a district stakeholder understands and fully supports the strategic plan's objectives. With the information gathered from this data collection instrument, I hope to learn about what social identities are present within SD62 families, their general knowledge about IDEA principles, and their preferred methods of communication regarding progress on the district's strategic plan objectives around IDEA principles.

Participation

A Canadian public school Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that the general public is aware of the educational progress made by the students within the schools within a district as well as helping set the budget, strategic plan, and vision for the continued success of students within the district.

You are eligible to participate in this research if you:

- Are at least 18 years of age, and
- Canadian citizens; have been B.C. residents for at least six months prior to their date of nomination, election or appointment; and have not been disqualified under the School Act or any other regulation from being nominated for, elected to, or holding office as a trustee; and were active as a Trustee during the 2021-2022 school year or began your term as a Trustee in the 2022-2023 school year, and
- Possess the ability to speak with confidence about your experiences as SD62 Trustee, and
- Have an interest in the improvement of how IDEA is taught in public schools, and
- Have some amount of Interest in the results of the current cycle of strategic planning for SD62 from September 2021 to June 2025.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate.

Data Collection

This study includes one data-collection phase for Trustees, the Knowledge-Sharing Session(s) (aka Focus Group[s]).

I am seeking participants for one focus group, or as I am choosing to call them, one Knowledge-Sharing Session (KSS). The KSS may take between 60 minutes and 75 minutes to complete and can be conducted over the video conferencing platform of your choice or in person, in accordance with provincial health orders and/or the group's preferences. The session will consist of at least one Trustee and no more than three (3) Trustees. An audio recording will be made of these discussions with additional notes being typed into an electronic text file. These will be used to create a transcript and/or summary of the overarching themes from the interview or discussion.

Upon completion of the knowledge-sharing session, *each participant* will be provided with *one \$25.00 gift certificate* to the restaurant of their choice as a compensation for any inconvenience which may arise because of their participation. All participants will also receive a summary of the overarching themes of the discussion as well as a transcript of only their responses and will have

the opportunity to provide clarification where needed, have portions of their response removed, and/or revoke their consent to participate.

Potential Benefit to Trustees in SD62

All the objectives and outcomes in *SD62 Strategic Plan (2021-2025)*, if achieved, would be of great and direct benefit for increasing the awareness and understanding of the importance of IDEA competency for SD62 students. With this research project, I hope to make recommendations which will help SD62 district leadership make further progress on their objectives and engage SD62 parents, guardians, and caregivers more fully into helping those objectives become a reality for their children who may have different social identities than those of their peers.

Potential Risks to Trustees in SD62

A risk which Trustees may face if they choose to become research participants is that the nature of the questions being asked can cause discomfort and moments of vulnerability, particularly if a line of questioning about the strategic planning and reporting process or the 2021-2022 school year is focused on a specific Trustee's actions or statements. These questions are not intended to call into question the professional judgment of the Trustee; however, feelings of hurt and vulnerability may occur.

If participants choose to attend an in-person KSS, there may be health risks associated with meeting in person, up to and including the contraction of communicable diseases such as COVID-19. All participants in an in-person KSS will be encouraged to use personal protective equipment such as face masks and hand sanitizer in alignment with the [UVic Communicable Disease Plan](#).

If at any time you begin to feel as if you are not safe while participating in a Knowledge-Sharing Session, you are free to perform any action which will result in your continued safety, up to and including leaving the session. If you take this action to ensure your safety, you will still be eligible to receive the incentive gift certificate; I will follow up with you after the end of the session.

Researcher's Relation with Participants

None of the members of this research team have any relationship with any member of the SD62 Board of Trustees beyond that of acquaintanceship.

Providing Your Informed and Ongoing Consent

Knowledge-sharing session participants will be sent a PDF version of the informed consent form by email or by postal mail which contains full study details and a list of questions at least two weeks prior to their scheduled interview. On the day of the interview, I will also obtain a recording of your verbal consent. By giving your verbal consent, you are indicating that you have had the opportunity to have your questions about the study answered by the researchers and that you freely consent to participating in this phase of the research project.

Withdrawal of Participation

If at any time after you have received your compensation gift certificate you decide to withdraw during or after data collection, you will be able to keep the compensation as a token of appreciation. No additional incentives or compensation will be given after all the data collection phases are over.

If at any time before the closing phase of this research project you decide that you no longer wish for the information you provided to be a part of this research project, please contact the principal researcher by email at tlrenkensebastian@uvic.ca or by phone at +1 (236) 314-3444 so that I can close out your participation and remove your responses from the data set and final project deliverables.

Anonymity, Privacy, and Confidentiality

Due to the small number of Trustees in SD62, you may not be able to enjoy the benefit of anonymity.

If you use your personal contact information to communicate with the research team regarding this phase of the research project, only principal researcher (Renken-Sebastian) will have access to it for the purposes of answering questions, scheduling a KSS, and sending the Informed Consent letter and list of questions prior to their scheduled interview date.

If a response which contains information about other stakeholders in the district warrants inclusion in whole or in summary in the project deliverables, pseudonyms will be used using a

consistent naming scheme (e.g., Teacher 1, Parent 1, etc.) and details which could be used to positively identify any member of the SD62 community will be excised.

Presentation of Research Results

The results of this study will be shared in the following ways that include but are not limited to:

- Master's project defense and the research project website
- UVicSpace, the repository for scholarly works of UVic students
- Co-presentations with members from SPEAC, NIEAC, and/or other family and community services entities within the SD62 community who have been consulted during the exploratory phase of this research project
- Conference oral and poster presentations
- Press-releases and social media
- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Open-access journal articles

Data Storage and Data Disposal

Data which has been collected from Knowledge-Sharing Sessions will be used for coding and analysis purposes by the principal researcher. This data will have the identifying information removed from the dataset and will be stored electronically on servers controlled by the University of Victoria. All data from this research project will be backed up to an external hard drive once a week which will be stored in a location that is accessible only to the principal researcher (Renken-Sebastian).

All recordings and notes will be saved on UVic's OneDrive system and maintained on Canadian servers.

All the data which is stored electronically will be irrevocably deleted from both the University of Victoria servers and the principal researcher's external hard drive up to twelve (12) months from the date of completion.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions about participation or concerns about how this research is being conducted, you may contact members of the supervisory team using the information below:

Name and Role	University of Victoria Faculty/Department	Email	Phone
Dr. Evert Lindquist, Supervisor	School of Public Administration	evert@uvic.ca	+1 (250) 721-8416
Dr. Sarah Marie Wiebe, Co-Supervisor	School of Public Administration	swiebe@uvic.ca	+1 (250) 721-8068
Dr. Lyndze Harvey, Second Reader	Faculty of Education (Curriculum & Instruction)	lcharvey@uvic.ca	+1 (778) 678-1183
Trisha L. Renken- Sebastian, Principal Researcher	School of Public Administration, Master's of Community Development candidate	tlrenkensebastian@uvic.ca trishalynn@renken-sebastian.ca	+1 (236) 314-3444

You may also contact the Human Research Ethics Office, University of Victoria by phone at +1 (250) 472-4545 or by email at ethics@uvic.ca.

By responding with "Aye" when asked for your verbal assent, YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.