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**Kootenay Lake
Teachers' Federation**
(CVTA & NDTA)

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January 17, 2023

Trustees
Board of Education of School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake)
811 Stanley St.
Nelson, BC,
V1L 1N8

Dear Trustees,

RE: Trustees Representing Schools and Students

At the start of the December 13, 2022, meeting of the Board of Education of School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake), it was noticed that when introducing themselves, several trustees stated that they represent all the students and all the schools in SD8. The KLTF brought this up during the "Comments or Questions" portion of the meeting and Board Chair Trenaman responded by explaining that while she was elected by her community, she represents all the students and schools in SD8.

The following is a link to the BC School Trustees Association website:
<https://bcsta.org>

In the section "The Role of Boards", the following is stated:

- While members of the board act as representatives of their community, their primary job is to participate in governance and oversight in the interest of all of the district's students, and to ensure that they are grounded in promoting student achievement and well-being

- A trustee’s role is to maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being, and to participate in decision making that benefits the entire district while representing the interests of the entire electorate.

To summarize, the BCSTA outlines that trustees, while elected by their community, are also representatives of their community - not the students or schools in the district. In fact, the term “electorate” is defined as “all people in an area who are entitled to vote in an election” - because almost all of them are not eligible to vote, this definition excludes almost every student in SD8 as people that trustees represent. While trustees should make decisions based on the best interest of students’ achievement and well-being, they do not represent them.

In fact, the KLTF wishes that trustees did represent the schools and students in their communities as stated by several trustees. But we also feel that that hasn’t happened in a long time. If trustees really want to represent their schools and the students in those schools, they need to visit those schools and speak to the staffs (PVPs, teachers, librarians, learning support teachers, counsellors, education assistants, custodians, secretaries, etc) and students to gain an accurate perspective/understanding of what is going on in these facilities.

There was a motion at the January 10, 2023, Meeting of the Board Held in Public that read as follows: “that trustees be encouraged to visit classrooms as volunteers to keep in touch with the grassroots of our school district in order to aide the best possible governance of our district. This can occur only when invited by a teacher and after notification of the school administration”. The fact that this motion did not pass is disappointing. The KLTF interprets this as an indication of the Board of Education’s lack of willingness to even want to know what is happening in schools.

Sincerely,

Doug Kunzelman

Doug Kunzelman
Co-President, KLTF
President, CVTA

Carla Wilson

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Co-President, KLTF
President, NDTA