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## Library Clerk Cuts Will Undermine Literacy and Waste District Resources

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From Angela Wilkins <awilkins@sd57.bc.ca>

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To Trustees <trustees@sd57.bc.ca>

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the recent decision to reduce library clerk positions across the district. As a teacher-librarian with 25 years of employment in our district—most of it in the classroom—I feel compelled to share both the educational and financial implications of this decision.

These cuts are more than just staffing adjustments. They represent a serious setback to our school libraries, especially following earlier reductions to the District Learning Commons. The result is that our library programs, which are central to student literacy, inclusion, and engagement, are at risk of being dismantled.

An additional fact I want to highlight is that the work done by library clerks still **needs** to be done. Shelving books, processing new materials, tracking orders, repairing damaged books, assisting students at circulation, and pulling materials for classroom teachers—none of these responsibilities disappear with the loss of a clerk. Instead, they will fall directly to teacher-librarians.

This shift means that teachers—whose time and salary are intended for instruction and professional expertise—will now be performing clerical duties. You are effectively replacing support staff with highly trained and more highly paid educators to complete tasks that, while essential, do not require a teacher's qualifications. From a budgetary perspective, this is an inefficient use of district funds.

More importantly, it will severely limit our ability to deliver the programs that drive literacy and student success.

Here are just a few of the programs that will be affected in my school:

- **Curricular Library Lessons:** Every class currently receives a weekly library session where we explore essential literacy and curriculum topics such as story elements, nonfiction features, research skills, biodiversity, and digital literacy. Without a clerk, it will be difficult to maintain this schedule.
- **Book Fairs, Reading Incentive Programs, and Grant Applications:** My clerk and I work together to organize and run annual book fairs that bring in thousands of dollars for our school library. I also run programs like our *Series Buttons* literacy incentive, which motivates students to finish entire book series and builds reading stamina. Additionally, I research and apply for grants each year to bring in further funding—time-consuming work that is critical, but only possible when I have clerical support to keep daily operations running.
- **Outdoor Education and Literacy Integration:** One of our most beloved programs involves taking classes to our outdoor “amphitheater” for nature-based storytelling and science exploration. This

type of cross-curricular, place-based learning simply cannot happen if my time is consumed by clerical tasks.

- **Student Support and Inclusion:** I help facilitate extracurricular activities such as a weekly games club and our Pride/Inclusion Club—spaces that foster belonging, community, and emotional well-being for students who often need it most. These will also be lost without support staff to share the workload.

I attempted this year to cover both my role and my clerk's during a period of extended absence or reassignment where her time away was not covered. The outcome was clear: I could not do both. The library suffered, students lost out, and my ability to meet professional expectations was compromised.

These cuts send a troubling message about the value we place on literacy and student support. Our libraries are not quiet rooms of the past—they are dynamic hubs of learning and inclusion. Undermining them undermines our students.

I urge you, as stewards of both educational quality and fiscal responsibility, to advocate for the reinstatement of library clerk positions. Investing in clerical support is not just about efficiency—it's about enabling teacher-librarians to do what they are trained and paid to do: teach, inspire, and build a love of learning.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to our students' education.

Angela Wilkins  
Parent  
and  
Teacher Librarian

I am honoured to live, learn, work and play on the unceded ancestral territory of the Lheidli T'enneh.

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