

From: [Kathleen Johnson](#)
To: [Julia Fraser](#)
Cc: [Rob Drew](#); [Watson Road Elementary School](#); [Melissa Madden](#); [news@castanet.net](#); [Board of Education](#); [Wayne Broughton](#); [Valene Johnson](#); [Lee-Ann Tiede](#); [School Board Office](#); [reception@kfs.bc.ca](#)
Subject: Re: Complaint - Watson Elementary. Re: Tree removal
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 5:17:20 PM

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WARNING: This email originated from outside Central Okanagan Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Julia!

Oh it's lovely to hear from you. Thanks so much for writing.

I don't have any children at the school, so not aware of the plans sent out. I live up the street with my elderly parents. Dad and I walk by almost every day as Dad has for many years (30+).

I am glad the plans were shared with parents. I imagine people were keen to have the area tidied and I can appreciate that.

Unfortunately, the awareness of the deep impacts of how we landscape isn't broadly known by the public, and the school community (parents, etc) is unlikely aware of the biological considerations and consequences of how landscaping is managed. I wasn't even aware until 5 or 6 years ago. So I'm not trying not to be judgmental but at the same time, it's critical we make changes in how we can support biodiversity and certainly to avoid inadvertently doing more harm.

I have the good fortune of spending a lot of time with and learning from talented Wildlife Biologists and Ecologists. The other important aspect of this is whether the Indigenous People of the School Board / Staff have an informed voice in the plan.

For now, is there a way to at least skip the landscape fabric, leave large soil circles around each tree (2-3m) and just place sod for now? That would help retain the soil in place, avoid the costly destructive use of landscape fabric and also avoid the impact of covering all that soil with rock which becomes really hard to manipulate later. Then a plan for exploring the potential installation of native plants, shrubs and locally sacred plants could be considered? There are many local resources to economically help with next steps after.

If the landscape fabric goes down and the rock is laid on top of it, this will be costly and difficult to reverse.

Would you be so kind to provide the plan, please? That would be a huge help to ensure I'm not making assumptions on the plan.

I've cc'd my trusted colleague and friend, Sara Jordan-McLachlan. Sara is a Biologist who is very knowledgeable of Ecology, native plants, education of children on biodiversity and urban wildlife. I have learned a tremendous amount from Sara, and hope she won't mind answering questions if you have any.

Thanks so much for engaging with me. I look forward to learning more.

Kathleen

On Mon, Nov 18, 2024 at 3:52 PM Julia Fraser <Julia.Fraser@sd23.bc.ca> wrote:

Hello Kathleen,

I was wondering if you have children attending Watson Road Elementary School? It is my understanding that the Principal has shared the plans for this space with the school community - staff, parents & students. Apparently, everyone is very excited about the proposed plans and looking forward to seeing it completed.

Thank you for your email and I hope you enjoy the rest of your day.

Warmest Regards,

Julia Fraser,

School Board Chair & Ex-Officio member on all committees,

Central Okanagan Board of Education

Vice-President & Resolutions Committee Chair,

BCSTA Thompson-Okanagan Branch

Cell: 250-681-0269

Email: Julia.Fraser@sd23.bc.ca

*I respectfully acknowledge that I live,
work & play on the unceded,
Traditional Territory of the Okanagan
Syilx People.*

From: Kathleen Johnson [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 2:10 PM

To: Rob Drew <Rob.Drew@sd23.bc.ca>; Watson Road Elementary School

<WatsonRoadElementary.School@sd23.bc.ca>; Melissa Madden

<Melissa.Madden@sd23.bc.ca>; news@castanet.net <news@castanet.net>; Board of

Education <Boardof.Education@sd23.bc.ca>; Julia Fraser <Julia.Fraser@sd23.bc.ca>; Wayne

Broughton <Wayne.Broughton@sd23.bc.ca>; Valene Johnson <Valene.Johnson@sd23.bc.ca>; Lee-Ann Tiede <Lee-Ann.Tiede@sd23.bc.ca>; School Board Office <SchoolBoard.Office@sd23.bc.ca>; reception@kfs.bc.ca <reception@kfs.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Complaint - Watson Elementary. Re: Tree removal

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Greetings,
I'm just going to include some contacts from the School District.

We all need to ensure we are actively making decisions to support Reconciliation and to enhance ecology and biodiversity in the urban environment.

I seek your urgent support to quickly reevaluate the plans at Watson Road Elementary and all other projects in process.

Thank you,
Kathleen

On Wed, Nov 6, 2024 at 12:29 PM Kathleen Johnson [REDACTED] wrote:

Hello Rob,
I never received a note back from you.

I see that non-native trees are now in place. Please confirm the plans for the rest of the area.

I note a sign that says "ReconciliACTION" on the fence at the school. If the plans include anything other than returning the remaining grounds to a native garden, then I have serious concerns.

I have noticed at nearby schools, that landscape fabric and gravel have been laid which are extremely damaging to ecological efforts. Please do NOT do this at Watson Road Elementary.

I noticed there is an Indigenous Student Advocate, Melissa Madden at Watson Road. I've included Melissa here too.

<https://wat.sd23.bc.ca/iep>

Please advise exactly what plans there are, and how Reconciliation and ecology has been included in these plans.

I've included Castanet as they were kind enough to call me back after the grounds were cleared of abokt

Thank you.

Kathleen Johnson

On Fri, Aug 23, 2024 at 1:43 PM Kathleen Johnson [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Rob,

Wendy passed along your email. I understand the weed clearing but definitely do not understand why none of the mature trees could be saved. Do you mind also sharing what wildlife sweeps were done before this took place? For nests, etc?

What type of new ground cover is being placed? Is it all native planting?

Thank you,

Kathleen
[REDACTED]