

From: [Amy Geistlinger](#)
To: [Lise Bradshaw](#); [Lee-Ann Tiede](#); [Julia Fraser](#); [Chantelle Desrosiers](#); [Wayne Broughton](#); [Lisa Guderyan](#); [Valene Johnson](#); [Kevin Kaardal](#); [Delta Carmichael](#); [Jon Rever](#); [Tyson Cook](#)
Cc: [Mona Essler](#)
Subject: Re: Thank You for the Recognition, and a Concern
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 1:46:59 PM

Dear Tyson,

I have read your email. Here is the reply that I sent to Barry Gerding, after a phone conversation with him:

"In response to your questions about the June 11th board meeting recognition:

"Mr Cook stated that 'Tyson [Cook] had nothing to do with [the award].' He said that it was his drag queen persona, Frieda Whales, that was being recognized, not Tyson Cook as a CEA. Why would we celebrate work unrelated to Board and school district business?

Our schools are welcoming spaces. So long as we are free to celebrate or not celebrate things according to our own convictions, our schools remain safe, inclusive places. If anyone is forced to celebrate something, that is no longer a safe environment."*

You said in your email that the Board was "recognizing a 14-year employee's achievement" (your words) that evening. Based on the statement made at the Board meeting, we were not recognizing Tyson Cook as a CEA. Should you wish to share with me about your work as a CEA, I'd be happy to hear about that.

Thanks,
Amy Geistlinger

*[SD23 Strategic Plan](#) Purpose: To educate students in a safe, inclusive [...] learning environment [...]."

From: Lise Bradshaw <Lise.Bradshaw@sd23.bc.ca>
Sent: June 12, 2025 9:59 AM
To: All Trustees <All-Trustees@sd23.bc.ca>; Kevin Kaardal <Kevin.Kaardal@sd23.bc.ca>; Delta Carmichael <Delta.Carmichael@sd23.bc.ca>; Jon Rever <Jon.Rever@sd23.bc.ca>
Cc: Mona Essler <Mona.Essler@sd23.bc.ca>
Subject: FW: Thank You for the Recognition, and a Concern

Board correspondence below.

From: Tyson Cook <Tyson.Cook@sd23.bc.ca>

Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2025 9:56 AM

To: Board of Education <Boardof.Education@sd23.bc.ca>; Cupe President <Cupe.President@sd23.bc.ca>

Subject: Thank You for the Recognition, and a Concern

Dear School Board Trustees,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the recognition I received at the recent board meeting for my Civic Award win. It was an honor to be acknowledged by the board, and I appreciate the time taken to celebrate this achievement. While the recognition was deeply appreciated, I must also express my profound disappointment and concern regarding the actions of one trustee who chose to sit out during the acknowledgment. This action felt discriminatory and undermined the spirit of inclusion and respect that I believe our school board should uphold. I understand that individuals may have differing views, but I believe that all members of the board have a responsibility to foster an environment of acceptance and fairness for all staff, students and community members. The decision of a trustee to visibly abstain from recognizing a 14-year employee's achievement due to personal biases sends a disheartening message and was deeply hurtful. I hope that the board will address this matter and ensure that all future recognitions are conducted in a manner that reflects the values of equality and respect for everyone. I will attend the June 25th meeting if she would like to apologize and retake a photo. Thank you again for the recognition.

Sincerely,

Tyson Cook

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