

**Kelli Sullivan | School Trustee - Board Chair**

School District No. 22 (Vernon)

1401-15<sup>th</sup> Street, Vernon, BC V1T 8S8

Feb 24, 2026

Dear Board of Trustees,

On behalf of the Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce and our membership of businesses and community organizations, I am writing to encourage School District 22 to work collaboratively with community partners to improve access to school gymnasium facilities for regional and provincial sports tournaments.

Our advocacy committee recently reviewed concerns from local sport organizers regarding the challenges of hosting tournaments in Vernon due to **rental costs, access limitations, and administrative barriers within SD22 facilities**. We understand the operational realities the District faces; however, we believe there is a meaningful opportunity to align facility access with broader community and economic development goals.

Sport tournaments deliver measurable economic benefit to Greater Vernon. Events such as regional and provincial volleyball tournaments generate significant hotel occupancy, restaurant traffic, retail spending, and overall visitor activity. These events support local jobs, strengthen small businesses, encourage new residents to the greater Vernon area, and contribute to municipal and regional tax bases. Beyond the economic impact, tournaments enhance community vibrancy, provide opportunities for youth engagement, and reinforce Vernon's reputation as a welcoming, active community.

When facility access becomes cost-prohibitive or unpredictable, event organizers are forced to consider alternative host communities. Other school districts across the province have demonstrated that flexible rental structures, streamlined booking processes, and collaborative planning with local sport groups can successfully balance operational requirements with community benefit.

We respectfully encourage the Board to consider:

- Reviewing rental rate structures for community tournaments to ensure competitiveness with neighbouring districts.
- Establishing a streamlined and transparent booking process for large-scale events.
- Exploring partnership agreements with recognized sport organizations to provide predictable access for regional and provincial tournaments.
- Recognizing the economic development role that school facilities can play when leveraged for community-wide benefit.

The Chamber would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Board or relevant staff to discuss how we can work together to support recreation and tournament growth in our area. We believe a collaborative approach can ensure that

school facilities continue to serve students first, while also contributing meaningfully to the broader economic and social health of our community.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to students and families in Greater Vernon.

Sincerely,

Brett Squair

Greater Vernon Chamber President

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