

March 11, 2014

Good Evening and Welcome to Education in Burnaby

We begin by acknowledging and thanking the Coast Salish Nations of Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish on whose traditional territories we teach, learn, and live.

Last week the Ministry of Education proclaimed it **Education Week** in British Columbia - an opportunity to celebrate student success and the excellence of educators, support staff, trustees and parents alike throughout the province. While we always appreciate an extra focus on education – the reality is, **every week is education week in Burnaby Schools**, where there are so many different learning opportunities and programs taking place.

There are many outstanding performances taking place the first two weeks in March, and we have proudly promoted them to encourage Burnaby residents to step inside our schools and see first-hand the excellence that prevails in our school communities.

The district has always placed a strong emphasis on its **Visual & Performing Arts Programs**, recognizing that creative expression enhances learning. Last week, three high school theatrical performances played to packed houses – with two high school shows scheduled for this week. The drama, singing and dancing was inspiring and a demonstration of outstanding talent, courage and maturity beyond the students' years. The performances also illustrate the importance of teamwork to make it all happen.

One upcoming highlight is the 30th anniversary of our **Grade 7 Public Speaking Challenge** – an event that encourages youth on the brink of high school to think outside the box and deliver a message that is personal and unique. The depth and passion that goes into these speeches is always impressive, and we invite you to come and be inspired tomorrow night, 7 pm at Byrne Creek.

As I close my report this evening, I want to **wish everyone a restful and safe spring break**, particularly as this is a pilot year of a 2 week spring break for Burnaby Schools. This was a decision we made to reduce our costs as well as to align ourselves with the other districts in Metro-Vancouver.

As a Board we know that some families will have the opportunity to spend time doing things together – but we also recognize that there are many families that are not able to get time away from work. District staff has been working closely with the City and other partners to provide programs and learning opportunities for our students that go beyond our classrooms. We will look forward to receiving input regarding how this time was spent as we make decisions for the coming years.

Thank you for your interest in public education in Burnaby.

Baljinder Narang
Board Chair

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Baljinder Narang

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