

INAUGURAL PUBLIC BOARD MEETING – DECEMBER 9, 2014

Good evening and thank you all for being here tonight.

I would like to begin by expressing my thanks and appreciation to the residents of Burnaby for electing us to represent the interests of Burnaby's public schools as your school trustees. You have entrusted us with the task of continuing to move Burnaby School District forward, ensuring that we meet the growing and changing needs of our learners. And continue to do so with a balanced budget.

A special thank you to James Wang, for his dedication in serving the Board for the past six years. We will look forward to continuing to work with James in his new role as a Burnaby City Councillor.

I'd also like to thank Trustee Baljinder Narang who has made a significant contribution as Board Chair for the past two years. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment.

And as I welcome back to the table, five incumbent trustees, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our new trustee, Katarina Chen, whom we all look forward to working with.

As we begin anew, it is a good time to reflect on the accomplishments the District has achieved during the last Board term and to take a glimpse at the four year term ahead.

The greatest focus for the Board is student achievement and success.

And the numbers speak to this success. Our completion rates and our transition rates to post-secondary continue to be well above the provincial average. In fact, our completion rate is at a ten year high of 86.6%. And annually, more than \$6 million in scholarships is awarded.

To create this success for each learner, it's important to determine each learner's unique needs.

Thirty years ago, we recognized that supporting the integrated needs of the community led to stronger families and improved student learning. Lochdale was the first Community School to open in Burnaby, and soon thereafter, 6 elementary schools became Community Schools. Following in the success of this model, we were proud to officially designate Byrne Creek as the first Secondary Community School in the District.

As the Province emphasizes personalized learning in the 21st century, we continue to enhance program choices to support learners' needs.

Since 2012, the District has introduced the AP Capstone Diploma Program, Multi-Age Cluster Classes (MACC), the Take-a-Hike Program, Outdoor Education Academy, Aboriginal Student Leadership Program in collaboration with Outward Bound, Burnaby Winter Club Hockey Program and a Basketball BC Academy. We have also expanded our Career and Industry Training Programs that provide students with a broader range of opportunities to receive work experience and/or industry certification.

TRUSTEES

Chair
Ron Burton

Vice-Chair
Harman
Pandher

Katrina
Chen

Meiling Chia

Larry
Hayes

Baljinder
Narang

Gary
Wong

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Many students have barriers to learning that need to be overcome before they can be successful.

To support the transition to school for immigrant and refugee students who have experienced trauma, an innovative District program was developed. In 2012, this program, Body, Worlds and the Brain, received an Award of Innovative Excellence from the BC Representative for Children and Youth.

And we continue to develop partnerships with generous community organizations.

They open their hearts to support the more vulnerable learners in our district. They provide our students basic needs like food, clothing and a safe place to go after school - basic needs that must be met before the learning can begin.

It should be noted that all of our new programs have been implemented while maintaining a balanced budget, despite incredibly challenging fiscal times.

To do this we have had to find efficiencies in new models of program delivery and energy use – the latter that has resulted in savings to date of \$2.3 million dollars and recognition by the City of Burnaby and BC Hydro.

We also strive to create safe, welcoming and state of the art learning environments.

- The District successfully completed its largest capital construction ever, which included seismic upgrades, expansions and new schools. The official opening of the new Burnaby Central, renowned for its LEED Gold Standard took place in 2012, and its leading edge track facility was completed in the Fall of 2013.
- Nearing completion is the largest technology infrastructure upgrade project in the District's history which will result in improved end-user device performance and better integration of technology in learning.
- And the District continues to lead provincially with the initiatives of its Safe & Caring Schools Team. Working with the Ministry of Education's ERASE Bullying Strategy, the District has trained all school-based administrators and designated staff in threat assessment and on how to create safe and caring school communities.

As we continue to create more inclusive school communities, students from abroad are showing an increased interest in attending Burnaby schools, with a 35 % growth in student enrollment, that translates to 1,100 students over the last three years. While this means additional revenues to support District programs and services and learning in all classrooms, from a global perspective it is enriching our school communities. International students provide opportunities for new friendships and the sharing of cross-cultural knowledge. This broadens the perspectives of our Canadian students and staff who otherwise might not get the chance to meet people from other countries.

Our vision over the next four years will be guided by our new strategic plan.

We will continue to build our working relationships with all of our partner groups ... student, parents, support staff, teachers and our school principals and vice-principals ... and we extend a warm welcome to the presidents from each of these groups who are here with us this evening.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

We also look forward to:

The launch of a new mini school at Alpha for high ability learners that begins in the Fall of 2015. Judging from the interest in the program to date, it is likely the first of more specialized programs to come as we continue to look at students' unique learning needs and connecting with student passions.

And armed with the guidance and direction of the District's second Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement, entitled, *Stronger Together*, we will work together to ensure that the learning experience of our students of Aboriginal Ancestry is enhanced to enable them to graduate and reach their full potential.

At this time I would like to acknowledge the commitment, resourcefulness and innovation of District staff who have worked hard to achieve these accomplishments. I would also like to recognize the leadership of senior management who have managed the way forward, all the while maintaining a balanced budget during challenging fiscal times.

As the Board of Education, it is our honour and privilege to continue to support the learning needs of the citizens of Burnaby – from the very youngest learner through our Strong Start centres to the oldest who take courses through Burnaby Community & Continuing Education – and in the middle of the spectrum, at the centre of it all, our students from Kindergarten through to grade 12.

**There are so many reasons to be proud of Burnaby Schools.
Thank you for your interest in public education.**

Ron Burton, Chair, Burnaby Board of Education