

## SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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Narang

Vice-Chair  
Ron  
Burton

Meiling  
Chia

Larry  
Hayes

Harman  
Pandher

James  
Wang

Gary  
Wong

## Good Evening and Welcome to Education in Burnaby Inaugural Meeting of the Board - December 10, 2013

***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.***

I would like to thank my fellow trustees for the privilege of serving as Board Chair for the year 2014. I am committed to working hard and serving our school district with integrity to the best of my ability. I am delighted that Trustee Ron Burton has agreed to serve as Vice Chair for the second year. Also, thank you to Trustees Larry Hayes and Meiling Chia for taking on roles of Provincial Councillor and Alternate respectively; and Trustees Ron Burton and Gary Wong for representing the Board as BCSTA/BCPSEA Bargaining Representative Councillor and Alternate respectively.

In 1950, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 10 December as Human Rights Day to bring to the attention 'of the peoples of the world' the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. On this day it seems fitting that we pay tribute to the late Nelson Mandela, a great man who dedicated his life to making the world a better place for all.

He was a man who was well admired for his beliefs and strong convictions – many of which guide the work that all of us do for public education and our community.

On poverty, he said:

***“And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity.  
It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right,  
the right to dignity and a decent life.”***

Sadly, BC's rates of child poverty are one of the highest in Canada. We see it every day in our schools, and we know that without food or proper clothing, learning cannot happen. We are fortunate for the generosity of staff who go above and beyond to find community partners who can provide snacks or breakfast, clothing and other necessities for our students who are in need.

And on Education, Mandela had this to say.

***"Education is the most powerful weapon  
which you can use to change the world."***

Truer words **have never been** spoken.

As we look ahead, while 2014 promises to be a year of hope, growth, and excitement, the Board will face extraordinary fiscal challenges in order to maintain current programming. We will continue to work closely with students, parents, teachers, support staff, and administrators to develop ways to address the Ministry of Education's focus on individualized learning.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the ongoing commitment and dedication of all staff that serve our school communities. Thank you to Superintendent of Schools Kevin Kaardal, Deputy Superintendent Gina Nicolli-Moen, Assistant Superintendents Heather Hart and Roberto Bombelli as well as Secretary-Treasurer Greg Frank for their strong leadership.

Finally, as we go into the holiday season, I would like to wish our school families, staff, and the Burnaby community all the best for the Season, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

And if you can, please consider taking Mandela's lead and offer some assistance to those who are less fortunate – for acts of kindness enrich the lives of both the receiver – and the giver.

Thank you and Happy Holidays

Baljinder Narang  
Board Chair