

When students feel welcome, supported, respected and safe, they are more engaged in learning

February 21, 2025

Dear Families,

Next week, several of our schools are participating in Pink Shirt Day on February 26 and have related activities and learning opportunities planned. While many in the community are aware that it is a chance to spark conversation about caring behaviour and kindness, it's also vitally important to recognize the origins of the day. Pink Shirt Day began more than 15 years ago as an awareness campaign about homophobic bullying. Today, Pink Shirt Day continues to serve as a reminder that homophobia and transphobia have no place in Burnaby schools.

As Trustees, we want to take this opportunity to share with you what kind of community and culture we work to create. The Burnaby Board of Education wants each of our schools and workplaces to be welcoming and safe spaces for all students, their families, and every staff member. This fundamental belief extends to everyone, including those who identify as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We will continue to support 2SLGBTQIA+ rights in the Burnaby School District and ensure that it remains a safe and supportive place for all. When individuals are empowered to show up as their authentic selves and are valued for who they are, it strengthens our entire community and enhances learning engagement.

The approach in our District is to establish a culture of respect and belonging. Throughout the year there are several opportunities for students to come together in friendship and allyship. Rainbow crosswalks greet students at many schools, serving as powerful symbols of our commitment to celebrating diversity. The District's Diversity Dance for all high school students is another example of an occasion to come together in celebration of being fully and freely who you are. In addition to our visible support at Burnaby Pride events and in the Vancouver Pride Parade, our Board and Senior Staff were early leaders in creating inclusive policy. We take seriously our responsibility to provide a welcoming and safe environment for everyone. The District Code of Conduct also outlines behaviour expectations and makes clear that bullying in person or through digital communication is unacceptable. We are unequivocally supportive of the diverse community that makes up our schools.

We work to create and support a culture of kindness and inclusivity that encourages students, staff and families to be proud of all aspects that make up who they are. There are initiatives and activities throughout the year in our District that explore the strength in our differences and the richness of what makes us unique. These opportunities, inclusive of Pink Shirt Day, provide windows to develop greater understanding of the lived experiences and challenges within our community, helping to open minds and broaden perspectives.

Building an inclusive school community is a shared effort, and families play a vital role. Through open conversations, support for school initiatives, and reinforcing respect and acceptance, families help create the foundation for a culture where everyone feels seen, heard and valued. We are grateful for our partnership with parents, caregivers, and the community in ensuring Burnaby schools remain safe, welcoming and empowering. Together, we can nurture a learning environment that celebrates diversity and strengthens our collective commitment to inclusion.

Sincerely,



Kristin Schnider
Board Chair



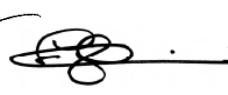
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IMPORTANT INFORMATION *Please have this translated.*

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معلومات مهمة. الرجاء ترجمتها. | Información importante. Por favor, que esto se traduzca.

Agahiyên girîng. Ji kerema xwe vê wergerîne. | معلومات مهم , لطفا این ترجمه را انجام دهید

重要信息, 请找人代为翻译。 | لطفا از شخصی بخواهید تا این متن را برای شما ترجمه کند.

ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਵਾਉ। | 중요한 정보입니다. 이것을 번역하시기 바랍니다.