

## TRUSTEES

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

As our next Board meeting will be on February 22, I'd like to remind everyone that we will be celebrating the Lunar New Year in the coming weeks, as the first day of the Lunar New Year is February 8. As you already know, the Lunar New Year is celebrated by many communities all over the world, including China, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam - and Taiwan where Trustee Chia and I came from. Many families in Burnaby School District will also be celebrating this important and auspicious occasion.

The celebration of the Lunar New Year can go on for 15 days or longer. Traditionally, there will be many activities happening every day. I fondly remember when I was young, a nice dinner celebration at my grandmother's house. At the table were my family members and relatives, as well as friends of my grandmother's who were invited and included as they had no family nearby. Those "grandmas" and "grandpas" were mostly immigrants and veterans who left China and moved to Taiwan after the civil war. They would get together to share stories about the old time, and miss their hometown together. I learned that the Lunar New Year is not only a time to have fun, enjoy the food and get the red packets (although they were good and important, too) - but also a time for people to support each other in our community.

Years later, I immigrated to Canada, and now I celebrate the Lunar New Year far away from my parents and family in Taiwan. However, we are lucky to live in the welcoming community of Burnaby where there is so much support available for each other. The Burnaby School District, of course, is dedicated to supporting the diverse needs of our students with different ethnic and cultural background. We are also committed to promote multiculturalism, mutual understanding and cooperation between different groups of students and families.

Today, we are very lucky to have a special guest joining our meeting. The monkey lantern you see here is made by artists from Lunarfest, an award-winning annual festival that takes places in downtown Vancouver and Toronto. He and his other monkey lantern friends will be touring Canada and visiting many communities. We are happy to have him here today to celebrate the Lunar New Year with us.

Thank you.

**Katrina Chen, Trustee**  
**Burnaby Board of Education**