

Good Evening and Welcome to Education in Burnaby March 12, 2013

TRUSTEES

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Narang

Vice-Chair
Ron
Burton

Meiling
Chia

Larry
Hayes

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Pandher

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Wang

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Wong

The City of Burnaby and the Province of British Columbia have proclaimed the week of March 11 – 17 as “Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children & Youth” Awareness Week.

Sexual exploitation is the exchange of sexual acts for food, shelter, a ride, drugs/alcohol, money or to gain approval. Sadly, a 2011 survey suggests that as many as 70 Burnaby youth are being sexually exploited.

The time for us to act is now.

Burnaby Schools are doing their part by building school communities where children and youth feel connected, valued and a vital part of the school community. Resilience research shows that connection with a caring adult is a protective factor.

The district’s Prevention Coordinator and I sit on the Burnaby/New Westminster Task Force for At-risk and Sexually Exploited Youth to address the issue of the sexual abuse of children and youth in the commercial sex trade and to promote services that provide support for at-risk youth.

The Task Force is a subcommittee of the City of Burnaby Community Policing Committee. It has representatives from the City of Burnaby, the City of New Westminster, Burnaby and New Westminster School Districts, Fraser Health Authority, Ministry of Children and Family Development, and a number of non-profit organizations providing services to youth.

It is important that if we suspect that a child is falling victim to a sexual predator, we take quick action by calling a service providing agency or the police. As a preventative measure, we need to educate our children about how to protect themselves; and connect them with resources if they need help.

Together we can help to ensure that all young people in Burnaby have the opportunity to grow and learn in a safe community.

On a brighter note, I would like to take this opportunity to publically commend the Burnaby Firefighters on how hard they work to support our most vulnerable students. Many of the Trustees, the Superintendent and I were honoured to attend their Annual Charitable Ball last Saturday, and to personally thank them for providing a healthy snack program at 15 of our district schools. What was equally as remarkable was seeing so many people out for the evening, showing their support for the firefighters and their cause.

It takes a village to raise a child – and to help them reach their potential.
And this village of Burnaby is generous beyond belief.

Thank you for your interest in public education.

Baljinder Narang
Board Chair
Burnaby Board of Education