

April 08, 2014

Good Evening and Welcome to Education in Burnaby

SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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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.

For many Canadians, April is a month when a number of joyous festivals are celebrated and religious traditions observed. They influence and inspire celebrations and activities in our schools and communities.

I begin with the important religious festival within Judaism. **Passover** lasts for eight days and celebrates the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. It is always in the spring, with dates changing from year to year. This year, **Passover** begins at sundown on Monday, April 14 and ends at sundown on Tuesday, April 22.

Easter is one of the most important holidays for Christians who observe many traditions during this time including **Lent**, **Holy Thursday** and **Good Friday**. **Lent** is the 40 day period before **Easter**. Christians, who observe, seek to experience in their own lives, Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Many people decide to give up something of importance to them during this period. **Lent** began March 5 this year.

While **Holy Thursday**, also known as Maundy Thursday, is the Thursday before **Easter** and commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, **Good Friday** is the Friday just prior to Easter which commemorates the day Jesus Christ was executed by crucifixion. It is a day of mourning for many Christians, who often attend special church services that day. And **Easter Sunday** commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ following his crucifixion. It is a holiday of celebration and joy and this year, **Easter** falls on Sunday, April 20.

And, finally, **Vaisakhi** is a festival celebrated by Sikhs, Hindus and Buddhists and, according to the solar calendar, this year it will take place on April 14. **Vaisakhi** is both a religious holiday and a cultural celebration. In addition to serving as a major harvest festival in the Punjab region of India, the Sikh calendar considers **Vaisakhi** to be New Year's Day. It commemorates the creation of the Khalsa Panth, an order of initiated Sikhs who are devoted to serving the Divine and Humanity.

These festivals and traditions compel us to remember the courage and sacrifices made by many to ease human suffering. They make us realize how fortunate we are to have freedom. They inspire us to be compassionate, truthful, strong, humble and respectful in serving humanity. They also show us joy and happiness in sharing and celebrating together with our families, friends and the community at large.

We are fortunate to share in the diversity and rich culture that each of these unique festivities and traditions afford to us. I hope you will be able to celebrate some of these important historical events and festivals during the coming weeks. Please take a few minutes to reflect on what these traditions mean to you and what values they may inspire. Happy Spring!

Thank you for your interest in public education in Burnaby.

Baljinder Narang
Board Chair