

Good Evening and Welcome to Education in Burnaby May 28, 2013

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Narang

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Democracy is the cornerstone of western society with multi-party elections embedded in the system to ensure citizens have a say in who represents their viewpoint at the government level. We pride ourselves in the privilege of participating in this process that affects our lives so profoundly.

Two weeks ago, British Columbians exercised their right to determine political self-determination and elected representatives from their communities to be their voice in Victoria. How an individual feels about the outcome is not important. What is important is that those that took part in the process have collectively spoken and represent the will of the people that the Board respects.

Like many past elections, voter turnout was poor and there are many reasons offered as to why that maybe so. However, reasons don't matter – they may offer some insight into why people don't vote but do not identify or address the underlying issue. To me, this is the real challenge. How do we engage voters in the electoral process and impart to them the importance of the right, the privilege and the responsibility of voting.

For our part, more than 20 Burnaby schools registered for Student Votes BC with many staging mock elections. Several of our secondary schools also invited candidates to their schools so they could ask questions of the candidates. One can only hope that getting children and youth engaged in the process earlier than they have been will make them aware of the importance of exercising their right to vote when they are of age to be able to do so.

The Board wishes to congratulate Premier-elect Christy Clark and her team on forming government for the next 4 years. We ask that she ensures adequate funding for public education be one of the top priorities of her new government.

As trustees, our role has not changed much. We will continue to be strong advocates for a fully funded public education system that meets the educational needs of all learners that attend Burnaby Schools.

A good news note: The Board would like to congratulate Secretary Treasurer Greg Frank on becoming President of BC Association of School Business Officials. Thank you for your leadership Mr Frank and we wish you a successful presidency!

Finally, we have all been participating in grade 12 school leaving ceremonies since last Wednesday. I would like to congratulate the more than 2000 students who make up Burnaby School Districts' Graduation Class of 2013. We are grateful for the privilege of teaching you and preparing you for the challenges of a changing tomorrow – and wish you well in all your future endeavours.

Thank you for your interest in public education.

Baljinder Narang
Board Chair, Burnaby Board of Education