

**Good Evening and Welcome to Education in Burnaby
June 25, 2013 – the last public Board Meeting of School Year 2012-2013**

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

Tonight's Board Chair Report, the last one of the school year 2012-2013 is dedicated to all Burnaby Graduates – the Class of 2013.

This year, more than 2,000 students graduated from Burnaby public schools. This includes students from our 8 high schools as well as students from District programs including Alternate Programs, International Education and Community & Continuing Education.

Trustees have been honoured to participate in the many school leaving celebrations throughout the district and we share the pride felt by all who have played a role along the way to get our students to this plateau.

How ironic that the Fraser Institute's report card on high school ratings comes out during this celebratory time of year. And it always creates headlines. However this time the general consensus was nicely summed up in an article in the Burnaby NewsLeader who interviewed SFU associate professor of education Daniel Laitsch. Of the report, he surmises that "I don't think they're a whole lot of use when we are having a school-quality conversation." The Burnaby Now's article included remarks from a father whose son is a former graduate from Burnaby South. His son just graduated from UBC's medical school and delivered the valedictory speech. The proud father's conclusion? The Fraser Institute's report is biased.

TRUSTEES

Chair
Baljinder
Narang

Vice-Chair
Ron
Burton

Meiling
Chia

Larry
Hayes

Harman
Pandher

James
Wang

Gary
Wong

We couldn't agree more. The Fraser Institute Report on secondary schools continues to be a flawed process with a rating system that is too narrow to compare schools. For example, three of the six mandatory exams used to produce this report are based on grade 10 exams. This is a particular disadvantage to ESL and new immigrant students, students who are not accepted into private schools, as it is a time when their education and grasp of the English language is not advanced. Yet it is these same students who create the incredibly rich cultural diversity in our schools that bridge gaps and bring our students together to be responsible citizens at home and at school. This is not something that is measured by the Fraser Institute.

The Fraser Institute report fails to point out that Burnaby School District rates of completion and transfer to post-secondary schools are well above the provincial average. And to date district graduates have received more than 5.6 million dollars in scholarship offers, including offers from internationally renowned post-secondary institutions such as Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia to name a few. The report also does not take into account other exam scores like Advanced Placement, and we boast about having one of the largest and most successful AP programs in Canada.

We don't rely on reports to tell us how our schools perform. We see the evidence every day. And we hear it in the words, and we see it in the faces of the students, parents, teachers and staff, many of whom are invited to our Board of Education public meetings. Their presentations speak louder than any Fraser Institute ranking - and prove that regardless of personal circumstances or challenges, students are thriving in Burnaby's public schools.

And it is based on these facts, not any ranking system, that we will continue to be proud of the success and achievement of all of Burnaby's schools – and we will continue to work together to create inclusive and engaging learning

environments to prepare our students for the challenges of a changing tomorrow.

As we conclude another school year, the Board would like to acknowledge the leadership provided at the District Office, the school based leadership teams, teachers, and support staff. We would also like to thank parents and guardians for their love, care and support during the school year.

And to the graduating Class of 2013, congratulations on your tremendous achievements; we wish you well in your future endeavours – and we look forward to learning where the roads to success may take you.

**Thank you all, for your interest in public education in Burnaby –
and have a wonderful and safe summer - Hai Ch Ka**

Baljinder Narang

Board Chair