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From time-to-time a variety of interest groups trot out the headline declaring that “Our public education system is broken and needs fixing!” It’s certainly a mantra that raises the hackles of those on both sides of the debate. I’m sure that there’s a middle ground somewhere ... but the key is to find that middle ground that can best meet everyone’s needs.

Just like it’s not a simple question ... there are unlikely few simple answers that address all of the concerns that are raised by those involved with the education of our children. Like many of us, I have had the benefit of being provided with a good, well-rounded public education here in Burnaby. Now, as part of a team who is helping to shape our education system for tomorrow, I’ve been able to see first-hand that public education is far from broken ... in fact it is only getting better.

Politics and budgetary issues aside, there’s never been as much opportunity and choice in public education. We’ll see tonight, with a presentation from the Burnaby North Hockey Academy, an example of how our system is evolving to promote the passion of learning in so many non-traditional ways. Not to take away from the need for “reading, writing and arithmetic” and other core competencies, skills and knowledge that our students will need to succeed, but “personalized learning” is a natural progression in preparing our young people for the challenges that they’ll face in an ever more complex future ... and I believe that our teachers, support staff and other partner groups are ready to meet those challenges.

In Burnaby, we’re not only aiming to create good students ... our goal is to help develop good people ... and we’re seeing examples of that each and every day.

Larry Hayes
Board Chair / Trustee
Burnaby Board of Education SD41