

TRUSTEES



# BOARD CHAIR REPORT

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**Good Evening and Welcome to Education in Burnaby - November 12, 2013**

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

## **Remembrance Day – our rights and freedoms**

On Friday each of our 49 schools held touching assemblies to honour the servicemen and women - that included many youth from Burnaby - who lost their lives or were injured in service, to protect the rights and freedoms of others.

On Friday it was also Aboriginal Veterans Day – a day of recognition that honours the nearly 10,000 Aboriginals who volunteered during the World Wars and the Korean War. Those who returned learned that they had to fight some more, for benefits that were given to non-native soldiers but were denied First Nations people. In fact, it wasn't until 1960 that Aboriginals were granted the right to vote.

And yesterday we officially recognized Remembrance Day in ceremonies throughout the country – above all else they remind us of those rights and freedoms that so many of us take for granted.

Freedoms of thought, speech, expression, religion and self-determination are freedoms that define us, and those that we value most. We are privileged to have a Charter of Rights that ensures our right to vote and our right to education.

Therefore for us in Canada, it is hard to fathom that there are many countries around the world that don't enjoy the right to an education.

***"I dreamt of a country where education would prevail."***

This powerful quote is by Malala Yousafzai, a 16 year old school girl from Mingora, Pakistan. She alone has provided an international focus on the right to education, by not being afraid to speak out, even after she was shot last October, for what she believes in.

Malala reminds us all how education is the key to success. It broadens minds, and opens doors to new and better job opportunities, while ensuring that economic growth prevails.

It is ironic that attempts to silence her have only made her stronger.

The United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown launched a UN petition in Yousafzai's name, demanding that all children worldwide be in school by the end of 2015 – a petition which helped lead to the ratification of Pakistan's first Right to Education Bill.

Time magazine considers her one of "The 100 Most Influential People in the World".

She was the winner of Pakistan's first National Youth Peace Prize and was nominated for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize.

And in October the Government of Canada announced that the Parliament of Canada confers Honorary Canadian citizenship upon Yousafzai. As she has put it, her voice has given rise to many Malalas, and she has certainly inspired our youth.

Let us all continue to be "Malala," and to be the voice for education - both at home and around the world.

**Thank you for your commitment to public education in Burnaby –  
Hai Ch Ka**

**Baljinder Narang, Board Chair**