



**P**ublic Education means that every child is given the opportunity to learn and to be inspired to reach their potential.

In Burnaby's public schools, we work together to provide engaging, inclusive and welcoming learning environments. We embrace the rich diversity found in our school communities, and we support the unique needs of each child.

We are making a difference. It is evident in the local, provincial, national and international scholarships and awards won by our students, teachers and schools.

We invite you to learn more about Burnaby's exceptional public schools – so many reasons to be proud.

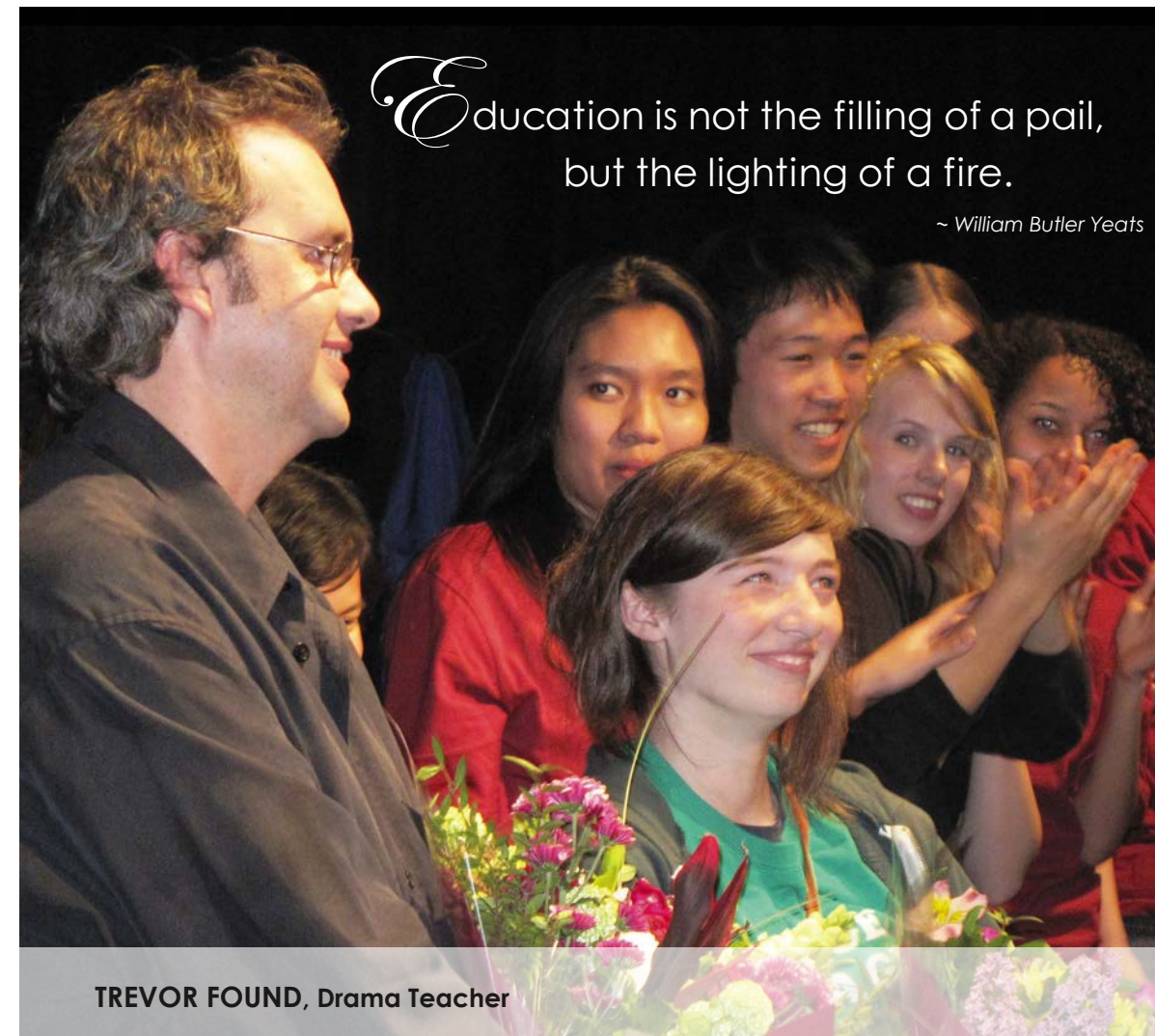
Aboriginal Education | ACE-IT | ACCESS Program | Advanced Placement Courses & AP Capstone Diploma | Basketball Academy | Burnaby Youth Sustainability Network | Challenge Program | Community Schools | Continuing Education | Cultural Transition Services | Digital Citizenship | Education Through the Arts | English Language Learning | French Immersion | Hockey Academy | Independent Directed Studies | Industry Training & Apprenticeship | International Education | Kindergarten Plus | BC School for the Deaf | Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) | Learning Support Services | Mandarin Language Arts | Mini School for Highly Able Learners (BETA) | Multi-Age Cluster Class (MACC) | Online Learning | Play Active School Soccer | SFU Soccer Program | SFU Swim Program | School to Work | Secondary School Apprenticeship | Settlement Workers in Schools | StrongStart BC Early Learning Centres | Summer Session | Summit Business | Summit Engineering | Take-a-Hike Program | Interdisciplinary Skills Trades Exploration Program (iSTEP) | Visual & Performing Arts | Young Parent Program | Youth Hub | Youth Support Services

# Inspiring Excellence

## in Burnaby's Public Schools

Education is not the filling of a pail,  
but the lighting of a fire.

~ William Butler Yeats



TREVOR FOUND, Drama Teacher



MARIA NICOLIDAKIS, Math Teacher



GREG BERNARD, Carpentry Teacher

Burnaby School District teachers know it's their job to find the spark within each student and continue to fan the flames into the high school years. **Our teachers make a difference.**



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### SHAYNA VIRGINILLO Cariboo Hill 2012 Grad

Shayna Virginillo had always dreamed of becoming a writer. Theatre didn't arrive on her radar until high school when she entered Mr Found's drama studio. It changed her life. Literally.

"I was the student who had friends in every group – but didn't quite fit comfortably anywhere. It was theatre that provided me with a true sense of belonging."



Shayna particularly enjoyed the plays that Mr Found selected – plays rooted in social change that challenged his students' beliefs. She thrived under his direction, and in grade 12, he coached her in a one actor play. This experience empowered her to become involved with Vancouver's Slam Poetry community. Shayna earned a spot on the Youth Slam Poetry Team, where she delivered poetry workshops in schools and performed at events. For her dedication to theatre throughout high school, she received a Michael J Fox Scholarship for the Performing Arts.

This year, Shayna graduated from the National Theatre School of Canada where she received the prestigious Tullio Cedraschi Award for "commitment to empathy, dignity, kindness and hard work as core to artistic excellence." She continues to write and recently moved to Toronto, where she's establishing her roots through auditioning and meeting other artists.



### TREVOR FOUND Cariboo Hill, Department Head Visual & Performing Arts

Trevor Found began experiencing the benefits of drama at an early age as a child actor, eventually taking on coaching jobs in his young adult years. After 25 years dedicated to the business of performing arts, he began his educational career in 2007 at Cariboo Hill Secondary teaching drama and English. During this time, he's been instrumental in helping hundreds of students find their passion and "directing" them in their post-secondary options. They, in turn, inspired him to pursue his Master's Degree in Education with a focus on theatre and creativity.

Mr Found believes in providing learning environments that foster socially conscious, critically creative students who are ready for the future, while encouraging them to be themselves. Students aspire to join his senior drama class, The Cariboo Hill Theatre Company. They purposely tackle non-mainstream plays such as *The Laramie Project* and *Rhinoceros* – confronting social justice and social norms. Mr Found feels strongly that these productions provide unique learning opportunities that lead to unpredictable outcomes – and this is where the deepest learning takes place.

The theatre space is open to all of his students at anytime. Mr Found recognizes that this creates a sense of belonging, purpose and trust. This feeling of a community is integral to enhancing artistic performance and self-expression – and students find success almost effortlessly.

*"Theatre is a place of great transformative power. It offers a way for young people to investigate and understand their own identity and to make sense of the world and their place in it."*

As a glimpse of last year's graduates illustrates, many students pursue passions in the theatre and beyond. Tess Abad plans to become a Costume Designer, and is attending a design school in California; twin brothers Jasper and Marcus Valliant will be attending Langara College for Film Direction and Theatre Production respectively; Donovan Schwalback will be pursuing a Broadcasting career through BCIT; and Arthi Chandra, Cariboo Hill's 2016 Valedictorian and an outstanding actress, is in SFU's Theatre Program.

Mr Found inspires his students to believe in themselves and take risks. The world is their stage – and the sky, their limit.

### NIKOLA SURJANOVIC Burnaby Central 2014 Grad

"Ms Nicolidakis' contagious passion for mathematics, her consideration for her students, and her continued endeavours towards becoming an even better educator are what make her an exemplary teacher. She inspired me with a passionate love for mathematics and learning which, in turn, motivated me to pursue post-secondary opportunities in Mathematics and Statistics at SFU."

These were the words written by Burnaby Central graduate Nikola Surjanovic in his nomination of Ms Nicolidakis for the SFU McEwen Family Teacher Award. It was a chance for him to reflect on his life journey so far, and show his appreciation by paying it forward. Ms Nicolidakis was the recipient of this award. It recognizes public high school teachers who have changed the lives of young people through their dedication to delivering exemplary education in Math and Sciences.

Nikola is also an award recipient and received a \$24,000 Gordon M. Shrum Entrance Scholarship. This fall, he began his second year in SFU's Statistics Program. He's also an executive member of the Statistics and Actuarial Science Student Association, that serves all students by creating a friendly and positive community by providing study groups, and networking among faculty – a mandate that clearly indicates he is likely to follow in Ms Nicolidakis' footsteps as his career aspiration is to become a Math Professor.

As for advice for future scholarship applicants, Nikola stresses the importance of focusing on your interests.

"That's important because everyone has something that they're really good at, it's just being able to focus on that and growing it."

*\* Amos Lee, Advanced Learning Department Head at Burnaby South also received a 2016 UBC McEwen Family Teacher Award*



### MARIA NICOLIDAKIS Burnaby Central, Department Head Mathematics

Maria Nicolidakis has been helping Burnaby Central students formulate answers to the Pythagorean Theorem since 1993.

"My mother is from the island of Samos, home of Pythagoras, so I'm convinced it's in my blood. When I was 4 years old, my sisters received stuffed animals for Christmas – me, an abacus. I was always able to see patterns quickly and expand on these ideas."

Ms Nicolidakis fondly recalls and gives credit to her formative school years for fueling the math spark within. Her grade 4 teacher ran a program that provided opportunities to solve problems from diverse perspectives. Her high school Math teacher, Mr Sarna, was humorous, yet precise, and loved to challenge the class.

Years later, as a teacher on call, she met teachers who mentored her on the most innovative ways to engage students and instill confidence in their abilities. She claims there is no secret to her success. While it is her role to teach the steps to find the answer – this problem solving process is always dynamic, and changes depending on the student.



Her latest teaching technique comes from SFU's Dr. P. Liljedahl's toolbox, "The Thinking Classroom." Students are at white boards set up around the room, working together and being actively involved in finding the answers. No sitting around passively copying notes in Ms Nicolidakis' math class!

*"It's that 'Aha!' moment that inspires me, when students understand a concept, especially those students who have always struggled with math. Their success motivates me, and they know I'm there to help them succeed."*

Just as Ms Nicolidakis was inspired during her educational journey by great teachers, she has in turn inspired so many Burnaby Central students. She was honoured to learn that four former students, all presently attending SFU – Carly Yu (Kinesiology), Samantha Zimmerman (Operations Research), Luke Gair (Computer Engineering) and Nikola Surjanovic (Statistics) – took the time to nominate her for the SFU McEwen Family Teacher Award. As the successful recipient, she received \$5,000 to be spent on classroom enrichment activities.



### GREG BERNARD Cariboo Hill, Department Head Applied Design, Skills & Technology

Greg Bernard began his career as a Red Seal carpenter in the Construction Industry. It had always been his passion and he has early childhood memories of creating things with a hammer and scraps of wood – and being mentored by his grandfather and father.

Fast forward 29 years, and Mr Bernard has been a teacher in the Burnaby School District since 1997. A "Greg of all trades," he's taught woodworking, carpentry, drafting, metalwork, and electronics. He was also instrumental in developing the Engineering Summit Program, which integrates math, science and technology education. He instructs its Engineering Projects course where students get to build and bring their "work sheets" to life.

Many students who sign up for Mr Bernard's classes think it's an easy way to an "A." They don't understand the complexities of the courses. His goal then is to foster the curiosity that brought them there. This approach aligns with the new curriculum, opening students' minds through critical thinking, communication and collaboration – the skills that ultimately open doors to new interests.

Mr Bernard also realizes that parents, and students alike, assume that the only reason to take a technology education course is to begin a career in trades. For some, this is the case and they become carpenters, cabinet makers, machinists, welders, plumbers, bike mechanics and contractors – right out of high school. He knows firsthand that his classes have also been the catalyst for his students to pursue careers in teaching, engineering, architecture, fashion/interior design, and animation/video game design.

*"I regularly have former students come in to visit because I was important in their life. These connections give my work real meaning."*



Mr Bernard sees the pressure that kids are under to choose a career path in high school. A strong believer that school should be more than training to get a job, he strives to help his students make the connection between what they do in class and how that may relate to the bigger picture.

"As a person who chose my current career well after graduation, I think it's important to remember that our paths are not set in high school – careers can change direction anytime – and that's okay."