

Burnaby School District Strategic Plan



2014-19

A Message from the Board of Education

The Board of Education's Strategic Plan for 2014-2019 serves to focus the District's work on priorities that will help meet the Burnaby School District Mission statement:

To prepare and support an inclusive, caring community of learners for the challenges of a changing tomorrow.

The Board of Education has been utilizing strategic plans for years. These plans help focus the work of the district and have resulted in new programs, facilities and schools. Some recent highlights include Advanced Learning programs, a Mandarin Language program, new sports academies, supports for the performing arts and the "Leed Gold" completion of both Burnaby Central, its state of the art international standard track and field and the opening of University Highlands Elementary school. Strategic planning has kept the Burnaby School District as a world leader in delivering public education that meets the needs of each learner and the whole child. Strategic planning has resulted in the Board of Education setting priorities that support prudent management of our fiscal resources in difficult times.

This plan has been developed in two parts: strategic goals and a working document with strategies. The working document can be changed during the five years of the strategic plan as circumstances require and input from the community is received. This built in flexibility will result in a better likelihood of success in each goal area.

The Board of Education looks forward to working with its partners and community organizations to achieve the ambitious goals of the plan.

Baljinder Narang, Board Chair



Strategic Goals

The Board of Education has identified the following four strategic goals to assist the District in meeting its mission: to prepare and support an inclusive caring community of learners for the challenges of a changing tomorrow. Currently, the District is recognized as a provincial leader for many educational programs as evidenced by external awards, provincially accountability results and its extensive community partnerships. The District is also noted as being a very well managed public organization. The Board of Education's strategic goals are:

1. **Leading the Learning**
2. **Building Digital Literacy and Citizenship**
3. **Ensuring a Sustainable District**
4. **Developing Leaders for Today and Tomorrow**

Leading the Learning

Leading the learning is the District's core work. It is how the District prepares its learners to succeed in a rapidly "changing tomorrow."

Schools in the province assist in the development of global citizens who are:

- Thoughtful and able to learn and think critically, and who can communicate information from a broad knowledge base;
- creative, flexible, self-motivated, and who have a positive self image;
- capable of making independent decisions;
- skilled and able to contribute to society generally, including in the working world;
- productive and gaining satisfaction through achievement and who strive for physical well being;
- cooperative, principled and respectful of others regardless of differences;
- "...aware of the rights and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of an individual within the family, the community, Canada, and the world."
(BC Ministry of Education)

The Ministry of Education and school districts are engaged in an educational transformation to improve the system to better prepare learners to succeed. The District's core purpose also needs to take into account the professional learning that staff requires to ensure best educational practices are utilized system-wide.

Leading Learning in Burnaby can be characterized as a learning journey that occurs in stages that build upon one another to foster self-directed life-long learners. As every learner has different gifts, talents and skills, these stages may occur simultaneously or in different orders. Guided by a comprehensive review of research, the learning that the District has identified as integral includes:

Ready to Learn

In order to learn effectively, students need to be regulated and socially and emotionally in a state that is focussed on learning.

Learning to Read

There are particular skills and instructional methods that better prepare students to be successful readers. Being a successful reader is essential to lifelong learning.

Reading to Learn

Being able to read to learn, to generate meaning, and to find the critical information is essential for both formal and informal learning.

Inquiry

Early learners arrive at school curious to learn. It is critical that the system continue to foster curiosity and teach specific skills that support inquiry, critical and creative thinking.

Pathways

To develop educated citizens who have a wide knowledge base, learners should be exposed to a broad based curriculum and have a choice of programs or projects that interests and engages them. The District strives to provide a variety of pathways including regular, alternate, self-paced, career and industry connections and apprenticeship options for our students.

Transitions

Most students transition from school to society by completing the requirements of a Dogwood Certificate. The certificate and accompanying transcripts are a tangible record of achievement. Schools also assist in the applications to post-secondary institutions for many students. However, this is not true of all of our students and they may require other processes to transition. These processes include using Student Learning Plans or Individual Education Learning Plans to meet the requirements of an Evergreen certificate or the completion of the Adult Dogwood certification. The District has a moral purpose to help open the doors for students as they transition from school to society. This work requires significant partnerships with support organizations, post-secondary institutions, industry, worksites, and industry and trades organizations.

Building Digital Literacy and Citizenship

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of efficient corporate structures supported by technology and that students are currently learning in a global digital environment. This strategic plan addresses these realities and the literacy requirements necessary to become effective digital citizens.

Digital Literacy includes the ability to use and learn appropriate business or learning applications, the development of powerful research skills, understanding bias in published content, online communication and decision making skills, understanding internet safety, understanding our digital footprint, and privacy and copyright issues as we work and learn online.

Digital citizenship might be described as the ability to integrate technologies to fully engage in learning, work or leisure activities. This requires that citizens use their digital literacy skills to analyze, learn, explore and create a world that, in many circumstances, hasn't been imagined yet.

Ensuring a Sustainable District

The Board of Education has a responsibility to the public to ensure that strategic planning is also focussed on sound fiscal and capital management. The Board must ensure appropriate financial management and processes are in place to allow continued investment in educational, operational and capital programs to maintain a vibrant and sustainable district. Examples of sustainable initiatives include continued investment in energy management focussed on reducing the District's energy consumption and related energy costs and green house gas emissions and ensuring facilities are aligned with educational program, enrolment and operational needs. The strategic plan recognizes these responsibilities with its goals under the "Ensuring a Sustainable District" category of goals.

Developing Leaders for Today & Tomorrow

Inspired leadership, creative innovation and employee engagement are essential for schools and organizations to become communities that focus on the enhancement of achievement, innovative practice and the promotion of lifelong learning for all partners. Building capacity in leaders and succession planning is critical in ensuring Burnaby School District continues to be an exceptional place to learn. In order to support and engage staff, a myriad of opportunities for skill development, partnerships in learning and mentorship training remain a focus. By investing in leaders today, the District will continue to build and grow a productive and resilient team for the ever-changing tomorrow – an organization of inspired learning and leadership.

The District has developed a working document to support the Board in achieving these goals including specific strategies and plans. These are broken down as follows:

1. Leading the Learning

Ready to Learn

- Support and expand Community Schools
- Continue to implement research based initiatives that support student readiness to learn
- Continue to implement the Ministry of Education's Erase strategy to support safe schools

Learning to Read, Reading to Learn

- Support professional development initiatives for staff that align with the District's Achievement Contract, District Literacy Plan and Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement
- Fully implement the school planning process based on a "Response to Intervention" model

Expand innovative program options and choices

Expand pathways and transition opportunities to post-secondary, work or skills and trades training

- Expand career program options
- Personalize learning by providing specialized program options

2. Building Digital Literacy and Citizenship

- Expand and enhance the District's network, information and operational efficiencies
- Enhance initiatives to develop digital literacy in students and staff

3. Ensuring a Sustainable District

- Ensure the District's organization, budget, resources, staff and facilities meet district needs in a safe, sustainable and efficient manner.

4. Developing Leaders for Today and Tomorrow

- Enhance and develop connected, ongoing leadership/coaching programs with provincial partners
- Support leadership professional development models that align with the directions in the District Achievement Contract, District Literacy Plan and Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement