

**November 26, 2019**

Good evening.

We're proud of the partnerships we have and recognize how they benefit our students and the District. In fact we believe so strongly in this approach that engaging and collaborating with educational and community partners is one of the priorities in our strategic plan.

Just last week trustees and I – along with district staff – had the privilege of seeing an example of the benefits of that collaboration and partnership in action. Alpha held a traditional Blessing Ceremony for a meaningful Coast Salish Storyboard that was created under the guidance of Squamish elder and artist Latash Nahanee. Many partners came together to make the project happen; including the Squamish Nation, which donated the 400-year-old cedar log. ArtStarts, the Burnaby Firefighters Union, Unitech and the school's Parent Advisory Council also made contributions.

The carving is a small act of reconciliation. Throughout the journey of creating the storyboard, the school community had the benefit of learning about Indigenous culture and our shared history as Canadians. None of it could have happened without collaboration.

There are many examples of partnership in our schools and at a district-level. We will hear about another tonight. The Burnaby Children's Charter was spearheaded by the Burnaby Children's Community Table. Our district staff are among the Table's co-chairs. It's a true community partnership, involving the City, Fraser Health, the Ministry for Children and Family Development, Equitas International Centre for Human Rights Education and many not-for-profits and community-based organizations.

On behalf of the Board I want to publicly thank all of our partners. It's been said that it takes a village to raise a child. As a Board and as a district, we recognize that we can't and shouldn't do our part alone. Partnerships strengthen all that we do.

**Gary Wong, Chair**  
**Burnaby Board of Education**