

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**  
**Reporting to Public Session on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**1. Burnaby School District Acknowledgement**

I would like to begin my Superintendent's Report this evening by acknowledging the extraordinary efforts of all Burnaby School District employees during these extraordinary times. And while the past few weeks have been challenging for people, both personally and professionally, school district staff have come together with dedication and grace like never before.

Since early March, staff have worked as one to ensure a coordinated path forward. From the health and safety of our community, to providing critical public services; from supporting the heroic efforts of the essential service workers in our community, to ensuring continuity of learning for our students—it was a responsibility that was embraced with commitment and further defined who we are as an organization.

While I cannot thank every individual here, I want to acknowledge the efforts of the many teams in our school district who worked tirelessly to “do our part” in stopping the spread of COVID-19 and paving the way to our “new normal”.

- To all those who worked to enhance cleaning protocols and health and safety measures; and to those who ensured safe access to sites, facilities and buildings.
- To those who answered the call to take on a job, other than their regular responsibilities and duties, to support essential service workers in our community; and to those who did the same to support those in need of food support, technology, and other unique needs during these difficult times.
- To those who reached out to connect with and provide support for the health and well-being of all.
- To those who found unique ways to reach out to each other, share laughter and provide encouragement.
- To those who developed resource after resource to ensure continuance of learning and created new ways of teaching and learning; to those who worked around the clock to ensure that infrastructures and supports were in place to do so.
- To those who shared our stories—stories of inspiration, innovation, community and compassion—providing hope and certainty for our collective future.
- To those who sit on community committees—lending their voices and expertise.
- To those who worked evenings, weekends, took phone calls...day or night.
- To every, single person who kept the functions and operations of the Burnaby School District moving forward, as “normal”, during times that are anything but normal.
- I am humbled, grateful and incredibly proud—enormous thanks to each and every one of you.

In addition, I would like to extend sincere thanks to our District Pandemic Planning Team (including each of our partner groups—the Burnaby Teachers’ Association, CUPE Local 379, Burnaby Principals’ and Vice-Principals’ Association, District Parent Advisory Council, and the district’s professional/exempt team) for the ongoing collaboration, support and dialogue.

To our students and parents—for your infinite patience as we navigated such large-scale change, and the recognition that we are, each one of us, doing the very best that we can - I thank you.

To our students who have buoyed us with their creativity, warmed our hearts, and provided ideas and insight on how we can continuously improve our efforts to support you. Thank you.

And finally, I would like to acknowledge Burnaby’s leadership team (managers, principals, vice principals, directors, executive assistants... you all know who you are) ...thank you hardly seems enough. And a very special thank you to my senior management team - your unwavering loyalty, commitment, expertise and leadership are, truly, remarkable.

In closing, I would like to thank the Burnaby Board of Education for their trust and confidence. Chairperson Wong and Vice-Chair Mezei, Trustees Brassington, Cech, Cunningham, Hayes and Stewart, whose visionary governance has provided tremendous leadership and guidance. The key priorities developed by the Board: thriving students, an inclusive and caring community, an inspired workplace, a district strengthened by partnerships, and a modern, safe and sustainable learning environment, has ensured that we look ahead to the future with a plan. And, as we can all well see, a future that, unbeknownst to anyone at the time, included a pandemic.

Recommendation: THAT the Board of Education receive this information.

## **2. Pandemic Update**

The second item in my report tonight is an overview and update regarding the district’s work during the past few weeks and preparations for the future.

Following the announcement by the Ministry of Education to suspend in-class instruction on March 17, school district staff have been working, along with the guidance and support from the Ministries of Health and Education, to best provide supports for students, staff, families, and our community. Informing our work have been the 4 guiding principles as set by the Provincial Government and, as such, it is an expectation that we:

1. Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees
2. Provide the services needed to support children of our essential workers
3. Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance
4. Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students

To that end, the following report is an update in each of these areas:

### 1. Healthy and Safe Environment

In order to assist with physical distancing and limiting the spread of COVID-19, we have limited access in our buildings and request that families and members of the general public call ahead regarding any inquiries - access will be by appointment only. This includes all our schools as well as our school district office.

All facility bookings have been cancelled up to June 30 - we are now looking ahead to bookings by all outside and community groups to August 30.

Current registrations for enrolment in our schools (including kindergarten, newcomers to Canada, families with work and/or study permits) can be completed online. This information can be found on our district website [www.burnabyschools.ca](http://www.burnabyschools.ca).

Our school playgrounds, school fields, and hard-court areas on our school sites remain closed.

With regards to school building operations, school principals and vice principals are on site. School principals have arranged scheduled, limited access for students to obtain necessities and personal belongings from schools.

We have enhanced custodial support and cleaning in all buildings. Physical distancing and hand-washing hygiene protocols in the workplace are strictly adhered to.

I would also like to acknowledge the District's Human Resources Department and the Mental Health Support Team for their time and efforts in providing online workshops and resources to support the management of anxiety, stress, worry, loneliness and supports to talk with one's own children and families about the health and safety of loved ones.

### 2. Support for Children of Essential Service Workers

We have worked closely with local childcare providers in our community to provide childcare and daytime educational support for children of Burnaby's Essential Service Workers.

The district currently provides on-site access to care in 6 schools across the district, with capacity to grow should the need arise.

Again, physical distancing, floorplan designs, small-group cohorts are all provisions in place that adhere to the health and safety guidelines as determined by the Fraser Health Authority and Provincial Health Office.

Cleaning kits, sick-child response kits and enhanced cleaning protocols are all in place.

### 3. Support for Vulnerable Students Who May Need Special Assistance

In addition to the global uncertainty, we recognize that families face additional pressures and challenges during these difficult times. From worries about the economy, to food insecurity, to no longer having access to community resources and services that were once relied upon, staff have been working to provide support and mitigate some of these challenges. Families may have children with unique learning needs, and many families do not have access to technology.

Following Spring Break the school district began adapting and extending our school-based meal program. To date we provide nearly 600 meals daily, distributing out of several schools across the district. It is important to note that the district has received donations of non-perishable goods and groceries from local businesses and individuals in the community.

With regards to technology, the district has distributed nearly 1,000 laptops, over 1,600 Zoom Education Accounts have been activated, and over 600 new blogs have been created.

The district continues to explore potential options and opportunities for programs and supports for some of our most vulnerable students or those who might benefit most from in-person school connection and in-class instruction.

Additionally, a focus for our Learning Support Services team is supporting children with diverse needs with customized resources. All learning support teachers and education assistants have been trained in using digital tools to connect directly with students at home, to support their learning plans and their work on classroom activities.

### 4. Continuity of Learning

Over 28,000 users visited our Continuing Learning Website in the first couple of weeks following Spring Break. The website provided resources to support students and families with self-directed learning activities across a wide variety of subject areas with a focus on digital literacy. Teachers are currently connecting with students through district email, classroom blogs, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom video conferencing. From online modules to video lessons and interactive conferencing, learning has transitioned from in-school classrooms to digital ones. And while we recognize that the transition was not seamless for everyone, the ways in which our educators are supporting students to help them engage in the curriculum from home is truly remarkable.

As the province of British Columbia begins the process of re-opening the economy and society, we understand that schools are a key part of this plan. We continue to hear about considerations for “re-opening” schools in the media. And while we continue to follow the direction and guidance of the Ministry of Education and Provincial Health Officer, we are looking ahead to the day that direction is given for in-class instruction to resume. We must anticipate, however, that it may look nothing like it once did in our schools prior to Spring Break. We are actively studying jurisdictions across the province, country, and

around the world with a focus, of course, on our own local context. Staff are currently consulting about what might be possible—many ideas and hybrid models are being discussed in order to ensure a thoughtful, gradual and coordinated approach.

I want to reassure staff, families, and our community that we will, as always, work alongside our local and provincial health authorities to ensure appropriate health and safety standards are in place. The health, safety and well-being of all continues to be paramount.

These past few weeks have not looked anything like our typical school days. While the innovation and creativity displayed by so many staff and students certainly provide hope for the future, we have not been without our challenges. We knew that there would undoubtedly be some bumps along the way and indeed there were. I know that things have not gone smoothly for all students and families. And I know that there continue to be many unanswered questions about graduation, reporting, assessment, and more. And the big question of course—"when will students be going back to school?" Or, as Dr. Theresa Tam (Chief Public Health Officer of Canada) stated the other day, "are we there yet?" We are working hard on answers to these questions and more moving forward. Information will be shared just as soon as it is available. As always, should you have any questions in the meantime regarding your child's learning or previously planned school events, please check in directly with your school principal.

Again, as I have said before, the strength and resolve of our entire community has allowed us to navigate through these challenging times together and, perhaps most importantly, define our collective future.

Recommendation: THAT the Board of Education receive this information.