

November 23, 2021

Good evening and welcome.

Tonight, I have two updates in the Board Chair Report.

As you are aware, the provincial government has implemented two temporary emergency orders to restrict non-essential travel in some areas and to prioritize fuel for essential vehicles.

Burnaby Schools will continue to remain open – in-person instruction is a key priority and will be maintained. School-based staff will continue to be in schools, supporting students, staff and communities. We will also defer any non-essential work involving travel to schools and encourage district office staff to work remotely to help conserve fuel.

What may be impacted are the number of school and district-based in-person meetings and events, school field trips, sporting activities and related types of experiences, as we support the province-wide efforts to conserve fuel by avoiding unnecessary travel. Non-essential activities may be deferred or rescheduled to a later date.

The extreme weather last week, has caused incredible hardship for many in our province. Our hearts and thoughts are with those who have been affected directly or have friends and family affected by the recent flooding and landslides. The devastation in the areas affected is heartbreaking.

We also encourage everyone to do what you can to limit fuel use where possible by walking, biking, carpooling or taking public transit and to help is what small ways we can to support the communities affected with compassion and empathy.

For our second item tonight, some of our staff are joining us for the first time from the new Board office – a renovation and addition to a heritage building that is the culmination of planning that began over a decade ago.

While I am incredibly proud of the work we have done as a board this past term, I fully recognize that our accomplishments are built on the work and successes of previous boards. The new board office reflects many of the values that Burnaby Boards of Education have prioritized. And I would like to thank our previous trustees for being such a strong foundation for us to continue this work in capital planning, and operations.

We are thankful to staff for engaging with the Nations to name our new education facility and collaborating with Indigenous artists to create installations that acknowledge the history of the unceded territories of these lands and a reminder to our moral imperative towards reconciliation as an education system.

The new board office is also fully accessible, has non-gendered bathrooms and will have modern video conferencing capability.

As a board, our stewardship will reflect the changing needs of our school communities as we build on the strengths of the district and as we continue to strive to improve and evolve.

Jen Mezei, Chair
Burnaby Board of Education