

**February 22, 2022**

Good evening and welcome.

It is hard to believe it will soon be two years since we gathered with students, staff, and community members for the “We mean Green in Burnaby Schools: Sustainability Visioning and Expo” on March 6, 2020. The energy and excitement was palpable. Close to 150 people packed into the Burnaby Central conference room to begin a dialogue on our sustainability aspirations starting with our definition of “Climate Utopia” to help inform the development of the Burnaby School District’s first Sustainability Strategic Plan. Little did we know how much would change in all of our lives just days later.

Although the timelines of our priorities may have shifted, our commitment to sustainability is unwavering and remains constant.

The Sustainability Strategic Plan will be presented to the board for approval later in our meeting.

But in tonight’s board chair report I wanted to highlight the process we have undertaken in the development of the Sustainability Strategic Plan. It truly is a reflection of how we, as a board, have evolved our own practices and priorities as well, and strive to foster collaboration through generative dialogue with each other, our partner groups, and our school communities.

The development of the plan includes key values and priorities of the board in a thoughtful and cohesive manner. Values and priorities that are embedded in the work that we are undertaking:

- Sustainability
- Indigenous ways of knowing
- Collaboration with partners
- Leading by acting and co-creating
- Empowering student voice
- Celebrating equity, diversity, and inclusion

Rather than a top-down plan that is prescriptive, the Sustainability Strategic Plan is a set of objectives and goals that empower our schools’ communities and enable staff, students, and community members to help lead us towards becoming a more sustainable district.

And this is also another example of how when we work collectively as a community through our individual roles, we can co-create something much more powerful as we amplify our single voices to a collective roar. And it is also a reminder of how important it is in our governance role to first listen with respect and open minds so we can continue to grow, change, and improve together.

**Jen Mezei, Chair**  
**Burnaby Board of Education**