

**October 23, 2023**

A welcome to all attending this evening, online and in person.

As you saw on *Inside Burnaby Schools*, we had some great ceremony around the installation of the Welcome Post and the Weave at the District Administration Office that was leading up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and just following it.

As a witness to it, I just want to share that during the ceremony for the Welcome Post, one of the witnesses shared that this post is for the children not yet born, it is for the children of the future and I thought that was very profound and it's made me think a lot. At the ceremony around the Weave, the witnesses were talking about reconciliation, but really about reconcili-action, about the action that's taken and that the Welcome Post and the Weave are two examples of this school district working with our nations to put reconciliation into reconcili-action.

Another step of reconcili-action that this Board can take is the renaming of Byrne Creek Community School. Earlier this calendar year the Board received a letter from the Byrne Creek Community School community, signed by the school principal, the staff committee chair, the community council chair, and the student government co-presidents, asking for a name change. Burnaby has a historic policy of naming schools for geographic locations and street names and while this name, Byrne Creek, is attached to a geographic location it is also named after Peter Byrne. Peter Byrne served for ten years as an Indian agent, someone who was directly involved in colonization, as well as having a strong working connection with the residential school system.

This information was shared not only with the Board but, through the letter, we learned that the information was also shared throughout the school community, primarily through Social Studies grade 8, 9, 10 and 11 classes, as well as grade 12 BC First Peoples classes and a subsequent student forum.

I'll quote directly from the letter, *"Students and staff identified the school name change as being crucial towards truth and reconciliation and a necessary step to make all of our school community feel acknowledged, safe, and cared for."*

This Board has sent letters to our nations of Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Kwikwetlem asking to have a dialogue and a conversation around many things, but predominantly our Strategic Plan and the naming of schools. The Board is also going to be doing some parallel work on the policy side so, as a Board, our priority is reconciliation through reconcili-action.

I want to thank the students in the school community of Byrne Creek Community School, as it's currently known, for raising their voice. We've heard your voice. We've heard the voice of students, staff, and community. And our number one priority is reconciliation through reconcili-action.

**Bill Brassington, Chair**  
**Burnaby Board of Education**