

INSIDE BURNABY SCHOOLS

April 23, 2024



LEARNING ABOUT CULTURES AND THE STRENGTH IN OUR DIFFERENCES

Alpha Secondary had a visit from **The Other People**, a multi-faith and multi-cultural organization. They spoke with approximately 80 Grade 12 students about the importance of learning from people with different backgrounds. The youth participated as part of their Social Justice, Contemporary Indigenous Studies, or World History class. The students probed the panel of prominent leaders with questions about racism, bigotry, and implicit bias in Canada. A special viewing of the documentary **Ice Queens**, which showcases Black women in hockey, was held at **Byrne Creek Community School**. With sponsorship from the **Vancouver Canucks** and in partnership with the **Ninandotoo Society**, the Toronto-based director of the film was flown in to do a question and answer session with the youth. Leadership students at **Burnaby Central Secondary** organized a **Cultural Appreciation Week**, including a chance to try different cuisines, learn, and participate in a cultural fashion show. **Settlement Workers in Schools** hosted a pre-**Nowruz** celebration at **Twelfth Avenue Elementary**, with traditional foods made by parents. **SWIS staff** also led a gathering for **Eid al-Fitr** at **Edmonds Community School**, with a feast for 350 people to mark the end of **Ramadan**. Sponsored by the **United Way**, the event featured entertainment, activities, and came to life with the help of many volunteers. Over at **Kitchener Elementary**, a Grade 1 class learned about the Muslim holy month through story and art. After asking their teacher, two Grade 6/7 students at **Brentwood Park Elementary** shared with their classmates about celebrations in their homes for **Nowruz**. As part of **Celebrate Diversity Month** at **Brantford Elementary**, families shared their traditions with the school. Students learned about the **Persian new year** tradition of having a **Haft-Sin table**. All of the items on it are selected for their symbolic meaning. To support the cultural sharing, parents collaborated with the school to create a video about **Nowruz** and **Vaisakhi**. Let's take a look at some of it.

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD TOWARD A NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Planning for a new elementary school in the fast-growing Brentwood area is moving ahead. This follows provincial support announced by **Minister of Education and Child Care Rachna Singh** at a special event held last week at **Brentwood Park Elementary**. Elder **Sempulyan Stewart Gonzales** of the **Squamish Nation** started the gathering off with a welcome and song. Grade 6 students **Rachel** and **Emilia** shared personal land acknowledgements. The Chair of the Burnaby Board of Education, Principal of Brentwood, and local Member of the Legislative Assembly also shared remarks. Grade 2 and 3 students sang lyrics about "A Million Dreams" to the delight of special guests who gathered for the announcement. Once built, the new **Brentwood Town Centre-East school** will help take pressure off existing schools facing capacity challenges.

A SPECTACULAR SHOW PROVIDED BY NATURE

A rare solar eclipse was a learning opportunity seized by many teachers, such as at **Maywood Community School**. This Grade 6/7 class watched a live feed and listened to experts from **NASA**. Students at **Second Street Community School** also watched it unfold online and marked the occasion with art. Children at **Armstrong Elementary** learned about the “moon’s shining moment.” And a Kindergarten class at **Marlborough Elementary** got to enjoy both the learning experience and eclipse-inspired cookies.

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH INDIGENOUS TEACHINGS

Students at **Westridge Elementary** created artwork under the guidance of **Austin Harry** from the **Squamish** and **Namgis Nations**. The children learned about **Coast Salish** design elements while creating their own mini masterpieces. Indigenous Leadership students at **Burnaby South Secondary** worked with artist **Trenton (Rain) Pierre** of the **Katzie First Nation** to help create a new art installation for the school. The work blends graffiti techniques with traditional Coast Salish design. A Grade 1/2 class at **Buckingham Elementary** did a floral art project inspired by **Métis** artist **Christi Belcourt**. At **Maywood Community School**, a Grade 6/7 class spent several weeks crafting meaningful personal land acknowledgements. As part of the process, they explored aspects such as their favourite place, their promise to the land, and their commitment to Reconciliation. The final step was a visual interpretation of their acknowledgement. Student voices were at the centre of a District-wide Secondary **Indigenous Youth Gathering**. It included guidance from local **Elders** and **Knowledge Keepers**, community building, gathering students’ feedback, as well as honouring identity through culture and local ways of being. Students shared their thoughts while being grounded in song, stories, weaving, pow wow dancing and smudging teachings.

STUDENT LEARNING SUPPORTED THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

A group of high school students from across the District got to learn about welding at a camp called **Mind Over Metal**. It was hosted by **BCIT** with funding from the **Canadian Welding Association**. The hands-on learning and career exploration opportunity was offered to students who might not otherwise get the chance to attend such a program. Twenty-five students, who expressed an interest in a career in law enforcement, got to attend an academy put on by the **Burnaby RCMP Youth Section**. The learning opportunity, where Grade 11 and 12 students explored aspects of policing, was featured by the Burnaby Now and held at **Burnaby Central**. The annual **Design an Ad** project is put on through a partnership with the **Burnaby Now**. Participating Grade 6 and 7 students from 17 schools got to explore marketing. They designed an ad for a local business or organization – including the school district. Selected ads are published digitally now through May, and showcased in a special online feature that gathers all of the chosen ads. More than 100 people came together for **A Path Forward**, a District-led information evening to support students with disabilities and diverse abilities on their next steps toward adulthood. Nearly 30 organizations were there that offer help with post-secondary, employment, and leisure opportunities. In addition to being able to ask questions at the booths, families and students heard from speakers, including graduate **Katie Zhang**, who shared how she’s achieving her goals of independence.