

February 27, 2024

Good evening and welcome. This week, many of our schools are participating in Pink Shirt Day and have related activities and learning opportunities planned. Throughout the school year there are several recognition days honoured that generate powerful moments of conversation, including Pink Shirt Day. On behalf of the Burnaby Board of Education, we want to take this opportunity to share with you what kind of community and culture we work to create.

Pink Shirt Day began more than 15 years ago as an awareness campaign about homophobic bullying. It remains an opportunity for meaningful discussion on allyship, empathy, recognizing harm, and lifting each other up as integral elements to authentic kindness. It reminds students that they can be who they are and stand up to bullying or discrimination. And it is a reminder that today, and everyday, homophobia and transphobia have no place in Burnaby schools. We continue to encourage the ideals of inclusion and celebrating diversity through policies that are guided by the District Code of Conduct.

Every student, staff member, and family in the School District are valued and respected members of our community regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This fundamental belief extends to all members of the Burnaby School District, including those who identify as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We will continue to support 2SLGBTQIA+ rights in our District and ensure that our School District remains a safe and supportive place for all. When individuals feel welcome, supported, respected and safe, it benefits everyone and helps engagement in learning.

Learning first-hand about cultures and expressions of who you are benefits us all. The connections between us are beautifully captured by local Indigenous artist Gord Dick from the Tsleil-Waututh and Lil'wat Nations who designed the District's official pink shirt. The symbol of the wolf represents how we are all standing together as one heart. The eagle brings healing and guidance from the ancestors.

We value our partnership with families and the opportunity to build school communities with you and your children that foster a culture of belonging where true kindness and compassion are modeled.

Together we can continue to support a learning environment that benefits all students and fosters a greater understanding of the lived experiences and challenges in our community.

Sincerely,

Bill Brassington Chair	Kristin Schnider Vice-Chair	Gary Wong Trustee	Jen Mezei Trustee	Larry Hayes Trustee	Mikelle Sasakamoose Trustee	Peter Cech Trustee
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