

INSIDE BURNABY SCHOOLS

January 28, 2025



NEW YEAR, NEW BEGINNINGS

As classes resumed at the start of 2025, many found ways to recognize the new year, such as this student-initiated **New Year's Resolution Project** at **Burnaby North Secondary**. Grade 4/5 students at **Brentwood Park Elementary** worked together to showcase their resolutions for 2025 through art. An intermediate class at **Brentwood** was among those who set goals at the start of the second term. A Grade 5/6 class at **Buckingham Elementary** wrote about what they want to accomplish this year. Students in dance from five high schools started the year off with a collaborative performance. The show featured the talents of dancers from **Byrne Creek**, **Burnaby Central**, **Burnaby Mountain**, **Alpha**, and **Moscrop Secondary** schools. Children at **Suncrest Elementary** have been testing out their recently installed sensory pathways in the hallway. It provides a fun brain break, with short activities to help students reset and refocus. Children at **Second Street Community School** returned from Winter Break to news that **Sophia** was being celebrated for winning a provincial contest. Her design was selected by **Easter Seals BC/Yukon** as one of two winners in their annual contest. Grade 6 to 12 students are challenged to symbolize a more "AccessAble society." Additionally, the design by **Darrel** from **Byrne Creek Community School** was chosen as a runner up. And as **Lunar New Year** approaches, many are getting ready for the **Year of the Snake**. These creations are by children at **Forest Grove Elementary** – home of the District's **Mandarin Language Arts Program**. **Twelfth Avenue Elementary** held a community gathering with a parent who shared Lunar New Year teachings.

SUPPORTING STUDENT PLANNING FOR NEXT FALL

Forest Grove's information evening about the **Mandarin Language Arts Program** was among many planning sessions held across the District – all designed to help students and their families make decisions for the 2025-26 school year. The Program of Choice is among the options at the elementary level. Families were also invited to an information session to learn about French Immersion. Additionally, there are dozens of District Programs of Choice for students in high school. This includes everything from year-long sports options like the **SFU Basketball Clinic** to technology choices – as seen here in the **Cisco Networking Academy** – and exposure to careers, such as the **Professional Cook Program**. There was a full house at the information session about District-wide **Career Education** programs. People came to hear about choices from trades and industry to technology. Student Planning Nights are also taking place at each high school. It's a chance to learn about the options, including electives. Students transitioning to the secondary level get to visit their future school to consider choices, such as band, art and drama. At **Cariboo Hill Secondary**, Grade 7s were also exposed to the **DigiPen Academy** – a Program of Choice located there.

CELEBRATING BLACK EXCELLENCE

Thousands of students from seventeen school districts joined an online **Black Excellence Day** event planned and hosted by the District. The fourth annual celebration was broadcast from **Byrne Creek Community School** with sponsorship from the **Ninandotoo Society** – the founder of the day. Student voices were at the centre, including youth from **Cariboo Hill Secondary**. The celebration for children and youth from Grades 5 to 12 also included speakers, such as track and field icon and writer **Valerie Jerome**. BC Provincial Court Judge **David St. Pierre** is another example of the many presenters accomplished in their fields. Professional violinist **Lord Nation's** performance was a highlight for many students. The event was emceed by actor and singer **Sam Darkoh** in front of a live audience, with opening greetings provided by the Burnaby Board of Education Chair. As **Black History Month** approaches, Grade 1/2 students at **Buckingham Elementary** created these works inspired by **Alma Thomas**. The African American artist is recognized as a major American painter of the 20th century.

MORE THAN WORDS: CONNECTION AND STORY

Storytelling is a powerful way to engage students in learning, such as seen here at **Stride Avenue Community School**. This is **Family Literacy Week** in BC. For many schools – including **Westridge** and **Kitchener Elementary** – it's an opportunity for joyful and community-building activities. Seniors from a nearby residence visited classrooms to share stories at **Kitchener**. Literacy is a priority all year in the District. The other month, **Kitchener** students were treated to a visit by award-winning Canadian author **Kenneth Oppel**. Best-selling author **Jason Reynolds** made a thought-provoking online visit last month at **Twelfth Avenue Elementary**. After listening to the book *Rock Your Mocs*, Grade 1 students at **Brentwood Park Elementary** designed their own moccasins. Earlier at **Brentwood**, little and big buddies came together to analyse story. Past and present staff and families at **Nelson Elementary** gathered to share stories with an **Indigenous Coast Salish** artist, as part of the development of a new school logo. For **Literacy Week** at **Stoney Creek Community School**, staff did a **Readers Theatre** performance for students. Additionally, athletes from **Simon Fraser University's** sports teams were guest readers in many classrooms at **Stoney Creek**.

GROWING GREEN: STUDENTS DIG CONNECTION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

With the call out this month, groups of students across the District are considering entering the upcoming **Climate Project Challenge**. Each year, the competition empowers teams to come up with projects that support the environment in their schools and communities. As in previous years, selected projects receive a funding award. A Grade 5/6 class at **University Highlands Elementary** has been learning about plants and local food while caring for microgreens in their vertical garden. Before the break, they turned their harvest into a salad feast. A Grade 7 class at **Chaffey-Burke Elementary** dug into their learning about climate change with an inquiry project. Primary students at **Chaffey-Burke** created reptile habitats after learning about their environment. Children in Kindergarten at **Brentwood Park** joined the time-honoured tradition of generations past and connected with the environment through immersion. Their explorations included making mud soup, mud bridges and mud volcanoes.