

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
Reporting to Public Session on Tuesday, June 24, 2025

1. Parkcrest Elementary: Honouring Indigenous Stories Through Art

Parkcrest Elementary School recently engaged its learning community in a meaningful initiative to honour the stories of the local Indigenous territory. In collaboration with Latash Nahanee—a respected Elder, artist, and Knowledge Keeper from the Squamish Nation—the school developed a mural depicting the legend of the Two Sisters, a significant story in Squamish culture.

This initiative exemplifies a shared responsibility for reconciliation and change. Although Parkcrest is the only school in the Burnaby School District without Indigenous students, it remains committed to embedding Indigenous Ways of Being into its learning environment—affirming that this knowledge is essential and valuable for all students.

Dawn Ashton, Principal, and Jessica Downie, Head Teacher, from Parkcrest Elementary School are here this evening to share the profound impact of this project as part of the lead-up to National Indigenous History Month, highlighting the deep connections formed with both the artist and the history of the land.

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Education receive this information.

2. University Highlands Elementary: Weaving Relationships with the Land and Community

At University Highlands Elementary, students and staff have cultivated a meaningful and authentic relationship with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, grounded in the principles of sharing, reciprocity, and mutual respect. This relationship was nurtured with patience and the guidance and blessings of Elders, forming a strong foundation for ongoing learning and connection.

As part of this journey, the school partnered with Tsleil-Waututh weaver Caitlin Aleck, who worked closely with students to share cultural teachings and collaboratively weave a representation of the school's story—rooted in the land on which it stands. This experience has deeply enriched the school community, fostering powerful emotional connections and a heightened sense of belonging and responsibility among students.

This initiative stands as a testament to the transformative power of Indigenous knowledge and the importance of building relationships that honour the land and its original caretakers. As we approach Summer Solstice it is a great time for the community to reflect and celebrate.

This evening, we welcome Rob Smyth, District Principal, Indigenous Education, Lindsay Holliday, Principal, University Highlands Elementary, and students Mika Vass, Roan Olivier, and Eleanor Atleo, who will share their experience.

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Education receive this information.