

Attn: ALPHA PAC Executives & AEC committee members
DPAC Chair/Executive Committee

From: Vivien Gomes,
Dpac member at large, Brentwood north zone

Jan. 18, 2025

**SUBJECT: Roots & River - Survey results - Townhall meeting Jan 9, 2025.
Survey results for School District Strategic Planning 2025-2030**

A virtual Town Hall was held live for families and Burnaby School District staff, as part of the engagement supporting the development of an updated Strategic Plan for the District.

The Town Hall was also an opportunity to learn about what we've heard so far from families, students, and staff about thoughts on the future direction of the District.

In addition to the Town Hall, a series of focus groups and surveys have also been conducted to help gain insight from students, families, staff, and partners. The information gathered will help to inform the Burnaby Board of Education, as they work to develop the new Strategic Plan.

The sessions have all been led by [Roots & Rivers Consulting](#), the consultant that the District has engaged to support the collaborative development of the new Strategic Plan.

When complete, the new Strategic Plan will guide the District for the next five years.

See work related to the previous five-year plan <https://burnabyschools.ca/strategic-plan-2019-24/>

Source: <https://burnabyschools.ca/engagement-toward-a-new-strategic-plan-town-hall/>

Outline of the engagement methods:

*10 interviews

*54 board and leadership survey responses

*59 focus group attendees

*2784 community survey

***2907 Total Community members engaged**

Pls refer to information below; summary of the slides presented by Roots and River consultant - made available at the town-hall meeting - on January 9, 2025.

Overall, the overview of all of the themes that came out of all the sessions.

Overview of themes

- *curriculum and educational innovation
- *equity, diversity, inclusion & reconciliation
- *enhance, support for diverse learners
- *staff recruitment, retention, and well being
- *improved infrastructure
- *community and family engagement
- *social emotional learning (SEL) and mental health

OVERVIEW OF THEMES

Curriculum and Educational Innovation

There is a strong focus on diverse program offerings and curriculum development, but gaps remain in providing supports to address evolving student needs and life skills, while emphasizing math and literacy levels.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Reconciliation

The District is committed to fostering inclusivity and reconciliation but faces challenges in consistent implementation and addressing systemic barriers within its practices.

Enhance Support for Diverse Learners

While there are initiatives to support neurodivergent, radicalized, English language learners and other underrepresented students, there is a lack of adequate capacity, early interventions, and tailored programs to meet the growing complexity of learner's needs.

Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Well-being

Staff showed appreciation for a positive and collaborative workplace culture. However, staff shortages, burnout and the need for more inclusive hiring practices highlight the urgency to create a supportive and more sustainable work environment for educators and support staff.

Improved Infrastructure

Overcrowded schools, outdated facilities, and limited funding for resources impede the district's ability to provide supportive learning environments.

Community and Family Engagement

There are strong relationships with families, but there is a desire for more consistent, clear, and transparent communication.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health

Current SEL and mental health supports are appreciated. However, increasing mental health challenges among students call for better-integrated supports for emotional wellbeing.

A) Community Survey Results

Approx. 3000 feedbacks from the community

What's working well

Diverse Programs and Opportunities

Families and students appreciate the variety of programs, including academic, trades arts and extracurricular options, which cater to different interests and career pathways.

Dedicated and supportive staff:

Many commend the commitment of teachers, principals and support staff in fostering a caring and inclusive environment.

Strong community Connections

Schools are seen as central to fostering relationships and community involvement, with proactive efforts to engage people

Areas needing attention

Resource gaps:

Concerns area raised about insufficient resources for both students and teachers, such as outdated materials, limited mental health supports, and inadequate access to technology

Support for diverse learners

There is a need for increased support for neurodivergent students (diagnosed and undiagnosed) and English language learners

Equity and inclusion implementation:

While efforts are noted, achieving consistency and depth in Reconciliation, equity and diversity initiatives remains a challenge across schools and leadership levels

Critical challenges

Staff recruitment and retention

Staffing shortages, particularly among and specialized support like counsellors, and EAs, are creating significant strain on the ability to meet students needs effectively.

Mental health and social emotion learning:

Increasing student mental health needs highlight the urgent need for more comprehensive support for emotional well being.

Infrastructure improvements

Overcrowded classrooms, reliance on portables, and aging facilities are cited as needing immediate action to enhance the learning environment

Key priorities from survey responses

Academic Excellence

Respondents want to more robust academic support, to prioritize access to learning resources and academic success. Practical skills development such as financial literacy and life skills, were also mentioned as essential for preparing students for life beyond school.

Student well-being and belonging

Concerns about the mental health and well-being of students were frequently noted. Respondents called for better access to mental health professional, integration of emotional support services, and a nurturing school environment.

Staff Capacity and Professional Development

Concerns about the capacity of teachers, education assistants, and staff, highlight the need for more recruitment, training, and support for educators to be well supported in education delivery

Innovation

Some respondents called for innovation in teaching methods to better prepare students for their future. Suggestions: Included integrating technology and emphasizing career readiness

B) Interview with partner groups

(Burnaby leadership team, cupe 379, dpac, settlement workers in schools (SWIS), early learning & community programs, indigenous enhancement, burnaby teachers association, education jurisdiction at Squamish nation)

What's working well

***diverse program** - a broad range of opportunities, including AP courses, trades, arts and leadership programs, enable students to pursue their passions.

***community engagement** - strong partnerships with local agencies and a thriving community school model foster collaboration and support.

***collaborative culture** - a family-life atmosphere with open communication among staff, administrators and stakeholders

***progressive approach** - recognized leaderships in anti-racism, equity and professional development for educators

Opportunities

***infrastructure expansion**

Build new schools and reimagine space design to better serve a growing and diverse population ***

***curriculum development**

Enhance culturally responsive education and life skills training to prepare students for future challenges ***

***innovative staffing practices**

Recruit and retain diverse representation of educators and support career progression and flexibility for staff

***Strong community partnerships**

deepen collaboration with local agencies, indigenous education councils, and other partners to address broader community needs

****this is beyond the scope of the district and requires ministry approval and funding*

What needs improvement

Staff Burnout:

High workloads and limited resources contribute to stress and retention challenges, particularly staff from radicalized and other underrepresented groups.

Equity Efforts:

Equity, diversity and inclusion work varies across schools, with resistance in some areas and limited actionable outcomes

Lack of Early Interventions:

Insufficient support especially for neurodivergent ELL students in early years impacts long-term success

Transparency and Engagement:

Desire for more transparent decision-making and on-the-ground consultation with community

C) Focus Group insights

(Students, families & caregivers, teachers & EAs, Burnaby leadership team)

What's working well

***diverser programs**

Extracurriculars, leadership opportunities, and specialized programs provide engaging and inclusive learning experiences.

***Supportive school environment**

Accessible mental health and academic resources support inclusivity and create a welcoming atmosphere for students

***dedicated and skilled staff**

Teachers and staff are appreciated for their dedicated collaboration and commitment to students.

***community and equity efforts:**

strong relationships with families and progress in equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives strengthen trust in the district

What needs improvement

***bullying and racism**

Inconsistent handling of incidents leaves students feeling unsupported, impacting their sense of safety

***overcrowded school and aging infrastructure**

Reliance on temporary portables and outdated facilities disrupts learning environments and planning

***staffing challenges**

Burnout and understaffing reduce capacity to meet student needs

***Curriculum gaps**

Insufficient focus on life skills career preparation, and culturally relevant content leaves, students underprepared for future success

Opportunities

***early support for learners:**

expand programs, resources, and support for neurodivergent and students with students facing barriers to meet their needs

***equity and inclusion leadership:**

improved representation, cultural safety training, and systemic equity practices across schools leadership levels

***infrastructure and resource planning:**

Build new schools, modernized facilities, and ensure adequate resources across the district***

***curriculum innovation**

Prioritize career readiness, life skills, and culturally responsive teaching to prepare students for post-secondary life beyond***

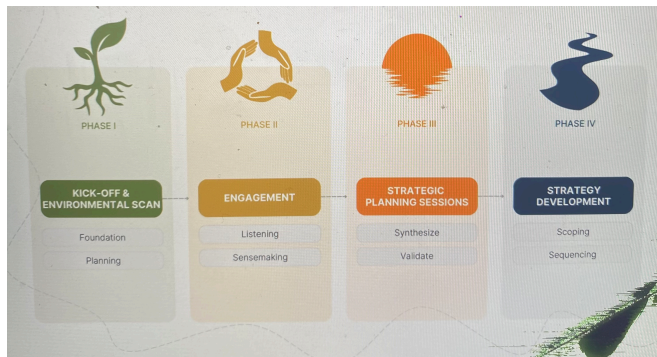
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NEXT STEPS

Strategic plan development

Insights from this engagement will directly inform the refinement of the District's Strategic Plan for 2025-2030.

Inquiries: inquiries@burnabyschools.ca



DPAC Executive Committee Contact:

<https://dpac.burnabypac.ca>

<https://dpac.burnabypac.ca/contact/>

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Source:

Engagement Toward a New Strategic Plan: Town Hall

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