

Good evening and welcome,

My report tonight focuses on one of the most critical aspects of healthy school communities: safety for students and staff.

This morning, Vice-Chair Brassington and Superintendent Niccoli-Moen and I met with the Fraser Health Authority's Medical Health Officer. I wrote to Dr. Ariella Zbar last week on behalf of the board, urging her to prioritize Burnaby School District staff in their vaccination plan. I also requested a meeting, which we had today, to learn why Burnaby staff are still waiting, as districts adjacent to Burnaby get their vaccines, and to have a conversation on the data informing the Health Authority's vaccination roll out plan.

These are anxious times for our staff as they continue to see increased cases in their schools and workplaces. It is the tireless efforts of all staff that have kept schools open. As vaccines roll out across the province, staff have been patient, trusted in the process, and put their faith in public health. I am grateful to the Medical Health Officer for meeting with us. Although we were given no definitive answers today, we are anticipating

to share some notable differences between the program in Burnaby and that in neighbouring districts, where

People in our community have strong views about Youth Section officers' connection to schools and student safety. We need to and want to hear that. As we work to both address concerns raised about police in schools and focus on a broader journey to confront systemic racism, we are taking concurrent action: we look forward to hearing from the community we serve through the anti-racism engagement process; we will continue to champion concrete support now. Things have evolved since that first Letter of Understanding between the RCMP and the district and I fully anticipate there will be changes to come in how the RCMP can better support our schools in the future as we approach this work through a trauma informed lens.

We know there is no single or quick fix to addressing systemic racism. On behalf of Trustees, we are deeply grateful to those willing to courageously share their lived experiences. We encourage everyone who is open to it, to participate in the District's engagement process when it launches next month. The first part of the process is a survey, which has been translated into nine languages in order to reach as many people as possible.

If we are to impact systemic racism, we must not only confront uncomfortable truths, honour stories that are shared, and address concerns – but we must also have an actionable strategy and be accountable for results. We remain committed to listening, hearing and creating a better path forward together.