

BYRNE CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Date:	September 15, 2025
Time:	7:00 PM
Acting Chair	Sam Nelson & Michelle Krywolt
Note-taker:	Tasha Murray
Attendance:	Allen Tsang (Vice Principal), Ben Paré (Principal), Michael Tanaka (Member at Large), Michelle Krywolt (Chair), Mimi Lim (Vice Principal), Sam Nelson (Treasurer), Tasha Murray (Secretary), 6 students/children, and 14 parents/family members
Regrets	Bal Dhillon (Community School Coordinator), Janet Salvador (Member at Large), Manvinder Kaur (DPAC representative), Neelu Din (Member at Large)

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 P.M. Land acknowledgement made by Tasha.

INTRODUCTIONS

A round of introductions was completed for Council Executive and staff present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

Agenda approved, no additions.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – BEN PARÉ

Ben welcomed everyone to the school, emphasizing that this is their school and encouraging families to reach out to administration with any concerns. He shared that Byrne Creek Community School currently has 70 teachers, including 10 new staff members this year, and that all positions are fully staffed as of today. Ben highlighted key guiding messages for the year: putting students first, fostering joy and curiosity, advancing truth and reconciliation, and promoting belonging and collaboration. He noted that the school population continues to grow and that several building improvements were made over the summer, including reducing the size of one science lab to create an additional classroom and replacing projectors with screens for sharper image quality. Ben also emphasized the importance of meaningfully including learners with diverse abilities, noting that this work takes time and collaboration. He added that supports provided to students with complex needs ultimately benefit all students.

Physical and Health Education 10 (PHE 10) teachers will be sending a letter home to families outlining upcoming lessons on sensitive topics included in the curriculum, such as sexuality and gender expression. It was noted that some families may hold different beliefs and may choose to provide this education at home. Students cannot opt out of learning about these topics entirely and parents who provide this education at home must work with

the classroom teacher to determine how the curriculum will be delivered to their child. This approach has been part of long-standing Ministry of Education policy. The letters will be sent home soon and may not include specific dates for when these lessons will take place.

The Burnaby School District does not have RCMP Student Liaison Officers (SLO) in schools like other districts have (e.g. Vancouver), but does have a Youth Officers Division. These officers do not have an office in the school but attend locations where youth are, such as schools, parks, and malls when called or needed.

The school is moving to e-mail notification (rather than a phone message) when students are absent (lunchtime and after school). Please ensure that your e-mail address is up to date. Note that some families with hotmail accounts or Gmail accounts with a lot of numbers and symbols may have trouble receiving messages from Burnaby School District addresses. A message will be sent to all families in the next week clarifying how to contact the school if your child will be absent (the school prefers an e-mail message about this).

Flex time will be changing in Burnaby schools starting in the 2025–26 school year. Staff have learned that students are most successful when they are given ownership and choice in how they use their time. While adults may not always agree with the choices students make, this approach supports learner independence and responsibility. During COVID, flex time shifted to serve as a “soft start” to the day to stagger building entry, but schools are now working to reclaim flex time as instructional time.

At Byrne Creek, flex time will occur after Period 1 and will begin on September 17 and occur during a one-hour block every Wednesday in the middle of the day. The first session will take a structured approach, focusing on core competencies, which are a graduation requirement for all grades. During this first session, teachers will also explain effective ways for students to use flex time—such as participating in exercise, group projects, or independent work. Students will be expected to sign up for each flex session on Team (the student’s grate team) by each Monday, indicating which teacher they will work with and what topic they will focus on. When core competencies are completed, parents will receive an automated message.

A parent walkabout will be held on Wednesday September 17 @ 6PM. Parents can meet teachers and participate in school tours. Not all the teachers will attend, but most department heads will be present. There will be special presentations for ELL, grade 12 graduation requirements and inclusive education.

Future topics for upcoming Community Council meetings:

- October – scholarship and post-secondary applications
- November – capstone, work experience
- January – school goals update
- February – grad events, course selection (student services)
- Other topics suggested: cell phone use in schools (the government has an expectation that students do not use cell phones during class time except for instructional purposes)

Is there a school nurse? No. School counsellors can best help with menstruation or any sensitive medical issues. The school consults with the health authority for various medical needs. Free menstrual products are available at the school.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR – BEN PARÉ FOR BAL DHILLON

Byrne Creek is the only community school in Burnaby. As a community school, there is no parent advisory council (PAC) but a community council. Members and executives don't need to have a child at the school to be part of the council.

The goals of community schools in Burnaby are:

1. To use the school and other neighbourhood resources and facilities more effectively for desired community programs.
2. To strengthen the existing school curriculum and programs through greater involvement and use of available human, physical and financial resources.
3. To develop a variety of educational, recreational, cultural, and social opportunities for children, youth and adults in response to needs defined by the community.
4. To build community capacity as residents become involved in community activities, services and issues.
5. To strengthen communications and engagement within the community.
6. To facilitate interagency coordination, cooperation and collaboration.
7. Equity will be added this year

Bal Dhillon is the Community School Coordinator who usually attends all Community Council meetings. The Burnaby School District has the only community school model in BC where the community school coordinator is a teacher. Bal and Sandra Medeiros (Community School Assistant) staff the community room. A student may access the community room for many reasons, including:

- School supplies
- Warm breakfast program (atrium) serves all students every school day
- Lunch program is focused on students who are food insecure
- Students with financial needs can access eyeglasses – can arrange testing and pay for glasses
- Winter jackets
- Can help fund many afterschool programs
- Holiday hamper drive (run by student government)
- Interagency cooperation within the community

Volunteers are needed to pick up Cobs Bread donations for the community room: Mondays at Market Crossing and Wednesdays Edmonds/Kingsway. This requires a large vehicle; volunteers sign up for a date. Sam passed around the Cobs Bread pick-up volunteer sheet. You may also contact the community room to sign up.

CHAIR'S REPORT – MICHELLE KRYWOLT

Michelle welcomed all new and returning families, emphasizing that the Community Council is a place for everyone to learn about the school and get to know staff, students, and other families. She encouraged all parents and guardians to attend meetings, noting that while elementary school PACs can sometimes feel intimidating, the Community Council is much more informal and welcoming. For families who are new to Burnaby or Canada, Michelle highlighted that the Council provides a great way to connect with the school community. Byrne Creek is a special place, with exceptionally welcoming staff and a supportive environment that has made for a positive experience for both of her children. Michelle encouraged families to get involved, stay informed about what's happening at the school, especially since students often don't share many details about school life at home.

TREASURER'S REPORT – SAM NELSON

The Community Council facilitates financial support of clubs, trips, supplies, etc. through the BC Community Gaming Grant. Proceeds are from licensed casinos in the Province. Funds can only be used for specific things such as events that benefit the school and the greatest number of students. To apply for funding, teachers and clubs make requests, the Council reviews allocations and makes suggestions, and at a later fall Council meeting participants will take a vote on the allocations. Current bank account balances: \$1,300 general account and \$9,125 gaming account.

DISTRICT PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DPAC) REPORT

DPAC meeting is happening on the same night, and an update is not available until next month.

PARENT QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The BARC (Building a Respectful Community) event is an annual grade 8 retreat held at every secondary school in September. It is designed to help all grade 8 students build connections, develop teamwork skills, and set a positive tone for a successful school year while welcoming them to the Byrne Creek community. The event will take place at the Edmonds Community Centre, where students will meet in the morning for sign-in. Throughout the day, students will participate in a rotation of team-building activities, with lunch provided. In the afternoon, they will have the opportunity to choose from recreational activities such as swimming, badminton, basketball, or volleyball. Students will be dismissed directly from the community centre at the end of the event.

If haven't seen your child's Go Card, come to the office; the Artona website with QR code, was provided already.

What kinds of clubs exist at Byrne Creek? Leadership – Leos service organization, student government; a list of clubs are on the school website. Clubs are student-led in high school; if your child has a particular interest, they may create a club with staff support. Clubs day will showcase all of the active clubs at the school.

During a career night in October different representatives from post-secondary come with displays. This is an opportunity for students and families to learn more. There is also a trades day. The first person your child should speak to at the school about career planning is their counsellor.

The school continues to operate on a two-semester system. While not all schools in Burnaby use this structure, there is no single best approach. The semester system offers several advantages: students manage only four classes at a time instead of eight, making workloads more manageable; students who arrive mid-year, including many international students, can more easily integrate without missing significant portions of the curriculum; and students can complete courses more quickly—for example, taking two math classes in one year instead of just one. There are some disadvantages as well, but overall, the semester model aligns with how most secondary schools in the province are organized. Some courses, such as band, continue to run throughout the full school year.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be October 6, 2025. Meeting adjourned 8:26PM.

Questions, Comments, Thoughts or Suggestions?

Email the Byrne Creek Community Council

byrnecreekcc@gmail.com