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LOCAL ELECTIONS
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THE WHISTLE

Newsletter of the Burnaby Teachers' Association

ELECTION
EDITION

SPECIAL EDITION ELECTION ISSUE

OCTOBER 2020



Election 2020

YOUR VOTE, YOUR VOICE



Saturday October 24

PRESIDENT: DANIEL TÉTRAULT, LP41@BCTF.CA **1ST VICE-PRESIDENT:** HEATHER SKUSE, LX41VP@BCTF.CA **2ND VICE-PRESIDENT:** SHANEE PRASAD, LX41VP2@BCTF.CA
BURNABY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION #115-3993 HENNING DRIVE BURNABY, B.C. V5C 6P7 604 294 8141

Burnaby Deer Lake



Advanced Voting Locations and Times:

Deer Lake United Church
5135 Sperling Ave
Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15– 21

Deer Lake Legion 83
Poppy Residences
5291 Grimmer St
Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15-21

South Burnaby Lawn Bowls
Club 4000 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15-21

The Candidates

In Burnaby-Deer Lake, BC Liberal candidate Glynnis Hoi Sum Chan and BC Green candidate Mehreen Chaudry are hoping to unseat BC NDP incumbent Anne Kang.



Anne Kang
BC NDP
Incumbent

Kang, most recently the Minister of Citizens' Services in the NDP government, served nearly three terms as a Burnaby city councillor before stepping down to run for provincial office in 2017. She secured nearly 9,000 votes, beating out Liberal Karen

Wang by nearly 2,500 votes and Green candidate Rick McGowan by nearly 6,800 votes.



**Glynnis Hoi
Sum Chan**
BC Liberals

Chan, a Burnaby resident who owns Happy Times Travel in Vancouver and Richmond, ran for Vancouver city council in 2018 under Hector Bremner's Yes Vancouver banner. She garnered just over 13,000 votes and came in 36th of 71 candidates.

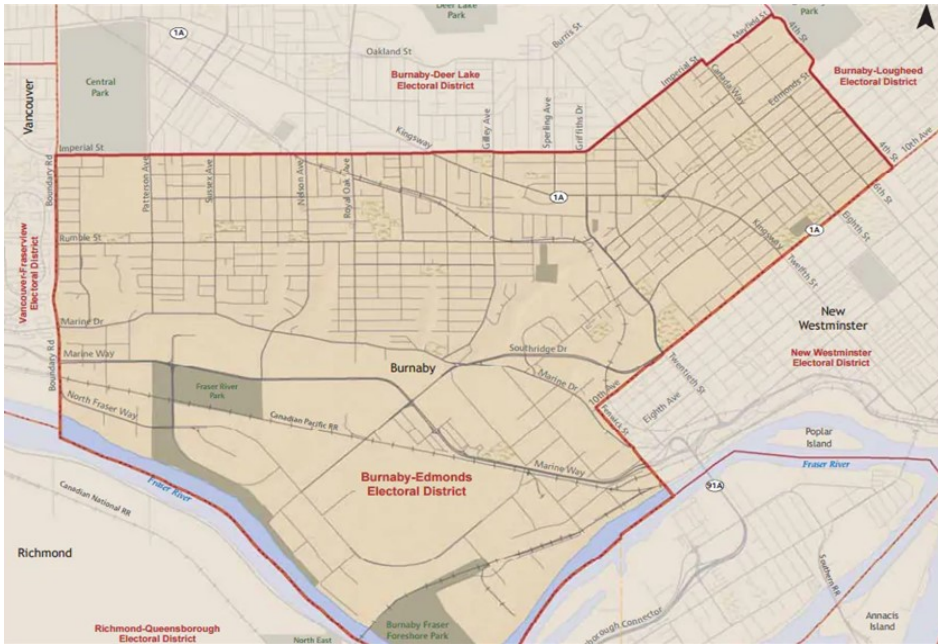


**Mehreen
Chaudry**
BC Greens

Chaudry, a project manager and business analyst, also ran for municipal office in 2018, but for the Greens in Burnaby. She got 12,600 votes and came in 13th out of 23 candidates.

(Summaries from
<https://www.newwestrecord.ca/>)

Burnaby Edmonds



Advanced Voting Locations and Times:

Alan Emmott Centre 6650
Southoaks Cres Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15-21

The Candidates

In Burnaby-Edmonds, only the three main parties are fielding candidates in this election. BC Liberal candidate Tripat Atwal and BC Green candidate Iqbal Parekh are looking to unseat three-term NDP incumbent Raj Chouhan.

(Summaries from
<https://www.newwestrecord.ca/>)



Raj Chouhan
BC NDP
(incumbent)

Chouhan, who most recently served as the deputy speaker of the legislative assembly, was the founding president of the Canadian Farmworkers Union and the BC Organization to Fight Racism. He first took the seat in 2005 by a mere 738 votes over Liberal Patty Sahota but has increased his margin in subsequent elections.



Tripat Atwal
BC Liberal

Atwal, a Surrey Realtor who taught high school English and social sciences in her native India, has lived in Canada since 2008. This is her first foray into Canadian politics, but her father, lawyer Charanjit Singh Atwal, is the former speaker of Punjab Legislative Assembly and the former deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha, the parliament of India.



Iqbal Parekh
BC Greens

Parekh has lived in the Burnaby Edmonds area since 1991. He has been working in admissions and recruitment at public post-secondary and independent high schools in B.C. and other parts of Canada for 10 years. He currently sits on the board of directors at Edmonds Community Center's 55+ group and clubs and also acts as treasurer.

Burnaby North



Advanced Voting Locations and Times:

Capitol Hill Comm Hall
361 Howard Ave
Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15-21

Vancouver Korean Gospel Church
3905 Norland Ave
Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15-21

Willingdon Comm Centre 1491
Carleton Ave
Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15-21

(Summaries from
<https://www.newwestrecord.ca/>)

The Candidates

Only the three main parties are running in Burnaby North, with the BC Greens and BC Liberals seeking to unseat the BC NDP incumbent.



Janet Routledge
BC NDP
(incumbent)

Routledge was first elected as MLA for Burnaby North in spring 2017 and currently serves as the NDP's deputy whip. Prior to her time in government, she spent more than 30

years working for the Public Service Alliance of Canada, a union representing 200,000 federal government employees. She has also represented workers at the Federal Employment Insurance Appeals Board and been involved in several non-profits.



Dr. Raymond Dong
BC Liberal

Perhaps no Burnaby candidate understands the hearts of local constituents better than Dong. Mind you, that's speaking quite literally of the cardiologist, whose practice is located in Surrey. Dong also has volunteer experience with advisory councils for Diabetes Canada and the Surrey Memorial Hospital Foundation, as well as working on the board of the Vancouver Academy of Music.



Norine Shim
BC Greens

Shim is the former executive assistant to the chief financial officer at the City of Vancouver, according to her LinkedIn profile. Prior to her two years in that position, she worked as an executive assistant to the managing director of First Capital, a real estate investment trust. She has also been a travel consultant and a hotel sales manager.

Burnaby Lougheed



Advanced Voting Locations and Times:

Lochdale Community Hall
490 Sperling Ave Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15-21

Lougheed Mall - #159
159-9855 Austin Rd Burnaby, BC Thu-Wed
Oct 15-21

Salvation Army Temple
7195 Cariboo Rd Burnaby, BC
Thu-Sat Oct 15-17,
Tue-Wed Oct 20-21

St. Stephen The Martyr-Anglican Church
9887 Cameron St Burnaby, BC
Thu-Mon Oct 15-19, Wed Oct 21

Charles Rummel Centre
3630 Lozells Ave Burnaby, BC
Thu-Wed Oct 15-21

The Candidates

In the riding of Burnaby-Lougheed, there is a total of four candidates listed by Elections BC, running for the three main parties – the BC Liberals, the BC NDP and the BC Greens – along with a Libertarian Party candidate.



Katrina Chen
BC NDP
(incumbent)

Chen was first elected to the legislature in the 2017 provincial election, and she immediately took on the role of minister of state for child care. She has worked as an organizer with tenants' rights advocacy group ACORN and served on the executive of several local non-profit organizations, according to her legislature profile.



Tariq Malik
BC Liberal

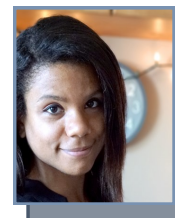
Malik is an entrepreneur working in

construction, development, property management and real estate. He's described in his party profile as a "devoted community advocate" with "a proven track record of community service and engagement." In 2018, he was elected president of the Greater Vancouver Bangladesh Cultural Association, in which he founded the Vancouver Bangla School.



Andrew Williamson
BC Greens

Williamson is a filmmaker and activist who says he decided to combine those roles to run for public office in this election, according to a LinkedIn post. He is a producer with Cedar Island Films, which most recently put out *The Magnitude of All Things*, a film about grief and hope in the climate crisis.



Dominique Paynter
Libertarian

In her professional life, Paynter works in children's programming and has a bachelor degree in traditional animation. In a profile of Paynter, the party notes she hasn't always been interested in politics, but "recent events have catalyzed her to take a stand" and enter politics.

(Summaries from
<https://www.newwestrecord.ca/>)

BTA Candidate Questionnaire

The BTA submitted a questionnaire sent out to all the candidates. Here are their responses

NDP

The four Burnaby BC NDP candidates would like to submit a joint response to this questionnaire. We worked together as a team to address the issues impacting Burnaby. We combined our many years of experience and our expertise to speak with one voice in order to effectively advocate for our community. On issue such as education, we are stronger together. We are committed to continuing to work with the BTA to ensure that the Minister of Education is aware of the challenges and opportunities in Burnaby Schools.

As an MLA, what will you do to help improve the safety of teachers' working conditions in Burnaby? Currently, classes are overcrowded, reporting of COVID cases is problematic and many teachers are feeling unsafe and under-supported.

The four of us each have close connections to the education system. Anne is a former Burnaby teacher and has two children who attend school in Burnaby. Katrina is a former Burnaby school trustee and has a child in a Burnaby school. Raj is a former PAC vice-chair and has two grandchildren who attend school in Burnaby. Janet has two grandchildren who attend Burnaby schools, her son is a Burnaby School Trustee, and her daughter-in-law is a teacher. We all want teachers to feel safe and supported. We understand that COVID has brought unprecedented challenges and our schools are a reflection of what is happening in our communities. We strongly believe that reducing community transmission of the virus will make our schools safer. While the recent low percentage of positive cases shows that B.C. has once again made progress on flattening the curve, we know there is more public education that needs to be done to ensure that people are gathering safely. We are committed to doing that work. With

the Lower Mainland having higher case counts than any other region, it is extremely important that we have local MLAs who will speak out strongly for local needs. Some areas will need extra resources and supports and we are committed to advocate for those resources. We recognize that each school district is different and needs the flexibility to respond to its unique circumstances. There are 24,000 students and 4000 teachers in Burnaby. It is a testament to the vigilance of the entire school community – teachers, students, parents, administrators – that communication to school communities has been streamlined and consistent. As well, we are committed to working with Fraser Health to address COVID-19 reporting challenges. We understand that the Burnaby Board of Education will be investing the \$11.8 million it saved as the result of its spending freeze at the beginning of the pandemic into COVID-19 safety measures. This type of investment is not normally allowed, but the John Horgan and the BC NDP government gave boards of education the power to do so because of the pandemic. We recognize that there are issues and challenges in the school system that need to be addressed. The following commitments are in our platform:

- We're committing an additional \$3 billion per year, on top of our already budgeted \$23 billion capital infrastructure plan that will be used to build new schools or expand/upgrade existing ones across the province, to relieve some of the pressure in areas with growing populations.
- Combining the total of previously announced federal and provincial funding with the new commitments in our platform, there will be an additional \$334.2 million available to districts for the 2020/21 school year to address COVID related needs, like hiring more teachers to accommodate alternative learning options; hiring custodial staff to enhance cleaning schedules; buying equipment like plexiglass barriers or air-scrubbers; updating ventilation; purchasing additional PPE and any other related resource needs teachers and districts identify.
- While we all hope we have seen the worst of the pandemic, we are

planning for every eventuality. And as part of that planning, the BC NDP commits to an additional \$46.2 million in COVID related funding per year for districts to use as they see fit.

- In addition, in August/September the BC NDP government purchased and distributed more than 1.5 million non-medical masks and 55,000 plastic face shields to districts across the province in preparation for the September school restart.
- Even prior to the pandemic, John Horgan and the BC NDP were vocal in their advocacy for an enhanced national sick leave program. When the pandemic hit, John Horgan reached out to Prime Minister Trudeau to renew his call for a national program and in July the federal government announced a \$1.1 billion national program that will give 10 days of paid sick leave to all British Columbians. A re-elected BC NDP will continue to work with the federal government to implement this program in the province as soon as possible

How will you work with the Burnaby Teachers' Association to ensure teachers' concerns and issues are part of your caucus' and party's priorities? As an MLA, what will you do to provide stable, predictable, and adequate funding for public schools?

All four of us very much value the relationship we have built with the Burnaby Teachers' Association during our time in elected office. We have always maintained an open-door policy with the BTA and have always accommodated their requests to meet. We've worked closely with them and have made every effort to address their concerns. If re-elected, we are committed to strengthening that relationship.

Over the past three years the John Horgan government has been working hard to undo the damage that the BC Liberal government did to our public education system. We are committed to ensuring that teachers receive the support they need. Each of us have strong connections to our education system and are committed to being strong voices for stable, predictable, and adequate funding for public schools.

When there are Burnaby issues that need to be addressed, the four of us speak to the Minister with one voice and advocate strongly for Burnaby's needs. After forming government, the BC NDP appointed an independent review panel to undertake a review of how public education is funded for the first time in almost 30 years. The panel made 22 recommendations to improve equity, accountability and financial management. The BC NDP is moving forward with a two-phased approach to implement some recommendations and to allow for further consultation with partner groups on the recommendations still to be implemented. For the 2020/21 school year, the BC NDP is providing an additional \$133.6 million in operating grants to school districts this year for a total of more than \$5.5 billion. In our first three years, the BC NDP government increased per-student funding by 20%, while other provinces have only grown by 5% or less over that time. The funding the BC NDP added to the education system amounts to an increase of \$1,900 in per-student funding. We recognize that we have more work to do to reverse the years of cuts under the BC Liberals, and the BC NDP remain committed to increasing supports for school districts to continue to deliver a world class public education for our students.

What do you think is the number one issue facing Burnaby schools right now and what will you do in the Legislature to help address it?

The biggest challenge facing Burnaby schools right now is the ongoing global pandemic. All of our province's education partners have come together to find ways to make major changes to the system in order to make schools as safe as possible. Getting the new infrastructure and procedures in place has been extremely challenging. There is still much we don't know about COVID-19 and that has had a huge impact on the planning process. The unsafe gatherings, which caused our case numbers to spike across the province, have made the work even more difficult. Dealing with these unprecedented challenges is a testament to the dedication of all our education partners.

The pandemic has created both operational and economic challenges for the Burnaby Board of Education. COVID-19 has reduced the amount revenue the Burnaby Board of Education receives from revenue streams such as international student enrollment, facility rentals, and investment income. These challenges were brought forward to us in a combined MLA/Trustee Zoom meeting in the Spring. The information we received in this meeting helped us to better understand the complexities of the impact of COVID-19 on Burnaby schools. Over the years the Burnaby Board of Education and local MLAs have met in order to keep each other apprised about opportunities and challenges within the system. These meetings are very unique to Burnaby and allow the seamless flow of information between the two levels of government. A concrete example of how these meetings have benefited Burnaby is child care in schools, from the partnership between the Provincial Government, the City of Burnaby and the Burnaby Board of Education: <https://www.burnabynow.com/news/education/school-board-city-province-partner-on-601-new-child-care-spaces-in-burnaby-1.24094874> Should we be re-elected we all commit to continuing to advocate for the needs of Burnaby schools in the Legislature. Our advocacy will be shaped by the information we receive from our Burnaby education partners, including the Burnaby Teachers Association and the individual teachers we interact with.

Is there anything else you would like Burnaby teachers to know?

We want Burnaby teachers to know that we value their work and their positive contributions to our community. We understand that the ramifications of 16 years of BC Liberal cuts to our education system run deep and that it is taking time to undo all of the damage they did. We know there is more work to do and we are deeply committed to increasing supports to school districts. We appreciate that the return to school during a pandemic has been hard on teachers. We thank them for giving our children a sense of normalcy during a crisis that has the potential of undermining their mental health and resiliency.

BC Liberals

Please accept the following responses to your Election 2020 questions from BC Liberal candidate in Burnaby-Lougheed Tariq Malik on behalf of all Burnaby BC Liberal Candidates:

As an MLA, what will you do to help improve the safety of teachers' working conditions in Burnaby? Currently, classes are overcrowded, reporting of COVID cases is problematic and many teachers are feeling unsafe and under-supported.

Now, more than ever, we need our political leadership to focus on the health and safety of British Columbians—including in our school system. Instead, the NDP decided to call a pandemic election. As the BC Liberal candidate for Burnaby-Lougheed, I've heard from Burnaby residents on a number of issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, ICBC, homeless encampments. As a father of 4, I understand the anxiety felt in our school system by teachers, staff, and families. During the pandemic, the BC Liberals want to ensure that there are consistent learning options for students across our province. This includes options for regular school in a safe setting during the pandemic, including hybrid and online, *whether in a public school, independent school or via online learning or Independent Distributed Learning*. We will upgrade K-12 facilities to ensure they are properly equipped, build schools across the province, and expand new construction in areas with rapid population growth.

How will you work with the Burnaby Teachers' Association to ensure teachers' concerns and issues are part of your caucus' and party's priorities? As an MLA, what will you do to provide stable, predictable, and adequate funding for public schools?

As an immigrant, I know it's important to work hard to ensure everyone has a voice. The BC Liberals are committed to improving students' and teachers' health and safety, by implementing a province-wide framework for hybrid and online learning options, and upgrading K-12 facilities. This would mean adequate

funding for the teaching positions needed to teach students in these various environments. On the other hand, instead of providing stable, predictable, and adequate funding for BC's education system, the NDP cut \$12 million from Independent Distributed Learning programs. We will restore this funding.

What do you think is the number one issue facing Burnaby schools right now and what will you do in the Legislature to help address it?

A key issue facing Burnaby schools are options for students and teachers to safely learn and work. This is why we're committed to create safe learning environments, including hybrid and online educational options.

Is there anything else you would like Burnaby teachers to know?

A part of rebuilding BC, and restoring confidence is ensuring that teachers and students feel safe in our K-12 educational system. This is why we plan to spend \$3.8 billion on education as part of our Rebuild BC plan, with \$1 billion in new capital spending. This builds on our record of spending 32% more on education from 2001-2017.

BC Green

Mehreen Chaudry Burnaby Edmonds

As an MLA, what will you do to help improve the safety of teachers' working conditions in Burnaby? Currently, classes are overcrowded, reporting of COVID cases is problematic and many teachers are feeling unsafe and under-supported.

As a mother whose kids are now back in school I know the anxiety very well. Kids in BC are very lucky to have teachers and staff who are so dedicated to their learning and well-being. Back to school has not been just hard for parents but has presented quite a challenge for the teachers. What we need right now is smaller class sizes and stronger mask policies in school.

"According to the B.C. Centre for Disease Control, there were 178 cases among kids under 10 years old on Sept. 10. By Sept. 30, that number had climbed to 298 — a

67-per cent increase. Among youth aged 10 to 19 years old there were 354 cases on Sept. 10. By Sept. 30, that number had climbed to 522, a 47 per cent increase." Global News Oct 1, 2020

As professionals, teachers are entrusted regularly with private information, and that should include knowing which children have contracted COVID19. Teachers spend six hours a day with students instructing and observing students in classrooms and on the playgrounds. When a case of COVID19 is identified in a school, teachers are well-positioned to assist in identifying close contacts. Often children cannot recall the names of peers they interact with in class or on the playground.

Additionally, teachers can strengthen the measures they take in their classrooms to ensure a safer environment.

I know there are also concerns about what happens if a teacher contracts COVID19. If they are asymptomatic, will they be required to teach from home? How will their benefits such as sick days be protected? Many teachers have other teachers in their family. How will school districts protect other teacher family members, who may work in other districts?

Teachers need clear, consistent guidelines and protections based on science, from the Province, so teachers can have certainty for themselves and their families. The Union needs to be at the table when these measures are developed. Green MLAs believe in putting the health and safety of constituents ahead of the political health of a party. I will advocate ensuring that teachers have a greater role in the development of public health measures that directly affect the classroom.

How will you work with the Burnaby Teachers' Association to ensure teachers' concerns and issues are part of your caucus' and party's priorities? As an MLA, what will you do to provide stable, predictable, and adequate funding for public schools?

There has not been much significant increased investment to reduce class sizes. Since the NDP took office there have not been significant declines in average elementary class sizes in Burnaby. On average, there are Over 600 classes with 4 or more IEPs in the district.

[https://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/ClassSize/Province%20and%20District%20Class%20Size%](https://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/ClassSize/Province%20and%20District%20Class%20Size%20and%20Composition.pdf)

[20and%20Composition.pdf](https://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/ClassSize/Province%20and%20District%20Class%20Size%20and%20Composition.pdf)

"As of 2015–16, BC's K–12 per student spending remained \$1,866 less than the national average." BCTF

[\(\\$1284 according to Fraser Institute's conservative estimate- still well below the national average\)](#)

Per capita Operating Funding has only increased 1.6 percent annually between 2016 and 2020 in nominal terms.

***A "basket" of goods and services that cost \$9093.38 in 2016 dollars would cost \$9665.69 in 2019 which represents a 0.6 percent annual increase in real terms**

[Canadian Dollar Inflation Calculator](#)

As we can see there is a huge gap in what is needed and what is provided by the government. What I can ensure is that I would work with the teachers in voicing and presenting this GAP so we can make a case to get more funding for our children who are the future of the country. The BC Green Party official plan for Early childhood education and care is to :

Create a comprehensive program for early childhood education and care. We would increase funding for child care programs from \$674 million in 2020/21 to \$897 million in 2024/25. Funding would cover the phase-in of the various elements of this plan for a comprehensive program that would include:

- Professional development opportunities to increase qualifications of existing child care workers, and the training of more early childhood educators in certified programs;
- The expansion of available physical spaces, prioritizing partnerships with public schools, community non-profits, and First Nations;
- Establish professional wages for early childhood educators;
- Up to 25 hours' free ECE per week for 3 and 4 year olds;
- Free childcare for working parents with children under 3;
- Maintaining child care subsidies and supports as needed to ensure adequate financial support for all families.
- Moving the Ministry of State for Childcare into the Ministry of Education.

Dominique Paynter

(Libertarian, Burnaby Lougheed)

As an MLA, what will you do to help improve the safety of teachers' working conditions in Burnaby?

Currently, classes are overcrowded, reporting of COVID cases is problematic and many teachers are feeling unsafe and under-supported. I think this is an opportunity to test out a number of alternative approaches to education. Options like online learning, student pods, homeschooling and private tutoring are all viable options that allow some deviation to the previous monolithic system we've had in place for the past few decades. I also believe that the decisions on this problem should actually rest with educators and those on the frontlines of academia, not the government. As an MLA I will certainly listen to feedback and suggestions from educators, but I think the majority of the decision making force should be with them.

How will you work with the Burnaby Teachers' Association to ensure teachers' concerns and issues are part of your caucus' and party's priorities? As an MLA, what will you do to provide stable, predictable, and adequate funding for Public schools?

I think it would be wise to look at moving decision-making away from the Ministry of education and toward local school districts. As a MLA I would aim to be in direct communication with the Burnaby Teachers' Association and other educational providers, about how we can best introduce a system where public education funding can follow the student, on an opt-in basis. This solution certainly won't please everyone, so it will be vital for me as a MLA to listen to the feedback I receive from your organization, as well as teachers and students, to see how I can amend and modify our party platform in a way that best represents those concerns.

What do you think is the number one issue facing Burnaby schools right now and what will you do in the Legislature to help address it?

Ensuring access to quality education for every child regardless of their socio-economic background. I think parents should have more choice in determining the

way it is delivered. It's already well-recognized that a one-size-fits-all approach results in far too many students being left behind. The logical extension of that view is that the availability of more approaches will leave fewer students behind. A quality education should not depend on the geographical location or the financial means of a child's family. Educational choice is how the playing field can be leveled between the underprivileged and those lucky enough to live in close proximity to the best schools. I would stress, again, that removing much of the provincial influence on regional educational issues, and moving it to a more streamlined, district focused level is the best solution.

Is there anything else you would like Burnaby teachers to know?

As a newcomer to the political landscape, I can't claim that I have all the answers or solutions for the many problems that plague our educational system. What I can say though, is that I am here to make a positive change, and in order to do that I need to be receptive to all kinds of feedback from those directly involved with issues in this community. I am open to hearing opinions, ideas and suggestions, even though I may not necessarily agree with all of them personally. Education for the younger Generation is something that is important to me. As a youth, school was my escape from many personal problems at home, and I had many teachers and mentors from school that helped put me on a trajectory to success. I'd like all children to have this option, regardless of their background. Education is a powerful tool, and I believe the constant back-and-forth in the legislature stymies any progress that can be made. There are too many hands in the pot, so to speak.

Party Platforms on Education

NDP

- Keeping kids safe during the pandemic: We'll continue to make classrooms safer through the installation of new ventilation systems, plexiglass barriers in key areas of the school, comprehensive cleaning stations, and by ensuring more hours of cleaning in all schools.

- Putting a focus on mental health in schools: We're building on our investment into mental health supports for students and staff and are committed to better supporting children and youth with special needs and their families, so everyone involved in our kids' learning gets the help they need.
- Fast-tracking improvements to online and remote learning: We'll invest in more computers and tablets, more training for teachers and support staff, and in new ways to improve social e-learning that promotes group interactions between students and teachers.
- Continuing the largest modernization of schools in BC's history: We'll continue the largest investment of schools in BC's history – with a focus on meeting seismic requirements and climate change and energy efficiency standards as set out in our CleanBC plan.
- Bringing in local food programs in partnership with school districts: To help make sure students are properly fed for learning, we'll work with school districts to help create local school meal programs based on district data and priorities. And just like with the hospital food program we created, we'll integrate FeedBC into this plan so that districts can include locally grown food.
- Taking the fundraising burden off parents: We'll continue to take the pressure off parents to fundraise while giving students safe, accessible playgrounds by expanding our Playground Fund to more schools.
- Making sure classrooms have the resources they need: We will deliver targeted investments to help make sure students have the classroom supplies they need to succeed, so parents and teachers don't have to pay the full cost out-of-pocket.

Liberals

- Increase supports and earlier assessments for identifying learning needs.

- Provide school instruction that meets the diverse learning needs of students.
- Ensure consistent options for full-time, regular school in a safe setting during the pandemic, including hybrid and online, whether in a public school, independent school or via online learning or Independent Distributed Learning.
- Work with school districts to ensure the provision of consistent unified portals for parents, including access to report cards, registrations and authorization forms.
- Upgrade K-12 facilities and ensure they are properly equipped.
- Build new schools throughout the province, and expand new school construction in areas with rapid population growth.

Green

- Ensure that enrollment during COVID does not compromise the quality of education, nor the ability of schools to retain current teachers or education assistants.
- Maintain additional COVID funding for PPE and online learning throughout this school year, and into the 2020/2021 school year as required.
- Ensure every school district has the resources to develop a credible and robust remote learning and hybrid learning options.
- Support the mental health of our students with \$24 million in new funding to enhance the number of counsellors in our schools, starting with the current school year.
- Develop and implement a province-wide plan to address racism that exists in schools, and commit to additional, ongoing funding to deepen the work of reconciliation and Indigenous education across K-12.
- Provide \$100 million in new funding to create a new capital program in the Ministry of Education to fund renovation and additions to existing schools to support ECE spaces.
- Address the continued disparities in

wages, class size and composition between districts;

- Improve access to speech-language pathologists and school psychologists and develop new resources for students with special needs.
- Develop a new funding formula that supports a 21st century education system.

Libertarians

- Shift authority down to regional school boards where possible;
- Empower parent choice in education;
- Have funding follow the student;

Labour Council Endorses NDP

Although the BTA has not endorsed this election, here are the statements from the labour organizations that the BTA are affiliated with.

New West and District Labour Council

At our September regular meeting the delegates and Executive Board of the New Westminster & District Labour Council passed a motion to endorse all of the BC NDP candidates in our region in the Provincial Election.

We appreciate the hard work of Premier Horgan and the BC NDP team for all of their work on behalf of working people and families after 16 years of BC Liberal neglect and mismanagement. It is critical that union members and working people get active in the election.

Vancouver District Labour Council Statement

We are days away from the October 24 BC general election. Thousands have already voted by mail and many more will vote in the advance polls which open tomorrow, Thursday, October 15, and stay open until Wednesday, October 21. We have a provincial government, led by NDP leader John Horgan, who's first priority is to fight the pandemic we find ourselves in. By adding resources to long term care facilities, protecting the jobs workers rely on, and assisting tenants to make their rent. The BC NDP is on your side.

We know that the stakes are high. Andrew

Wilkinson and the BC Liberals are in it to help their rich, connected friends and give tax breaks to large corporations. We can't afford to go back to the days of Gordon Campbell and Christy Clark. BC families need to continue moving forward. Together, we can expand and improve \$10/day childcare, support our seniors, make it easier for low income families, continue to improve health care for everyone and create jobs in a greener economy. Going backward is simply not an option.

Make a plan today. Make a plan to get out and vote by mail, the advance polls or on election day. Find your most convenient voting location here: <https://elections.bc.ca/voting/where-to-vote/>

The Canadian Labour Congress supports John Horgan's plan for BC. A plan that increases affordability, a better life for working people, equality for all citizens, and government that will fight this pandemic together with all of us.

Join us all and get out and vote and support John Horgan and your BC NDP candidate.

In Solidarity,

Stephen von Sychowski
President, VDLC
Vancouver and District Labour Council
<http://www.vdvc.ca/>

This Provincial Election, Let's Not Let Perfect be the Enemy of the Good – Vote NDP

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A provincial election is upon us, one like no other before. Our lives have changed dramatically over the past several months. But as ever, as teachers, we know that our votes hinge not only on a party or candidate's stance on education, but on who we wish to lead our province in a socially just way, keeping in mind things such as affordable housing, childcare, and community wellness.

Core Values

Let's look at the core values of the two major parties that have a chance of forming government.

The BC NDP have clearly chosen a path where they will be focussing on investments

in public infrastructure, as they should. This public infrastructure includes affordable childcare, a plan that they ran on in 2017 and the BC Liberals vehemently opposed – right up until the infamous clone speech ([The Province Christy Clark Impersonates New Democrats](#)). After the failed clone speech, however, the critic on this portfolio for the BC Liberals (Laurie Throness) infamously stated in the BC Legislature that universal childcare investments are not necessary. He and presumably his party, as he is their spokesperson on this file, feel that universal childcare already exists when one parent stays home to look after the children – a not very subtle way of saying that women should stay home and let their husbands work ([Trailtimes Child Care Isn't Needed](#)). The very fact that the BC Liberals have not replaced him in this critic role, or censured him, speaks volumes with respect to their intention to follow through with a universal childcare plan should they be elected. But the most alarming bit, however, is that it is generally understood that during times of crises, budget deficits are inevitable. The approaches the two parties are taking to get there, however, are quite different. The BC NDP traditionally has prioritized public services, whereas the BC Liberals have a history of prioritizing tax cuts for the wealthy and, in turn, cutting public services to offset the lost revenue. The recent case study in this province was seen in 2001 when the newly elected BC Liberals immediately cut taxes in a way that disproportionately favoured the wealthy. This was inevitably followed up by ripping up contracts in the Health and Education sectors (disproportionately affecting women), coupled with massive cuts to social services to offset the lost revenue in what many economists acknowledge was a regressive tax shift – the wealthy benefited tremendously. In fact, the Campbell tax cuts were so regressive that, combined, these tax cuts delivered an average of over \$9,200 per year to the richest 10% of BC households, and more than \$41,000 to the top 1%. In contrast, lower income households received an average tax cut of \$200 per year, while those in middle got just over \$1,200 – all at the expense of a massive reduction in social infrastructure ([Policy Alternatives CCPA BC Regressive Tax Shift](#)). So it is with disbelief and horror that I viewed the BC Liberals' announcement of a

PST elimination for one year and a reduction to 3% for the subsequent year, as this revenue loss accounts for at least \$10 billion – larger than the Campbell tax cut in 2001 ([Consumption Taxation](#)). What effect will this have on education? Presumably years of wage freezes for teachers, a flatlining of spending on education (i.e. not keeping up with inflation), and austerity on a massive scale for the entire public sector, at a time when ordinary folks will need supports from the social ministries the most. How can we be certain of this? Because the poor and middle class in 2001, disproportionately experienced the hardship felt by the more than \$3 billion loss of public spending per year on health, education and other public services that Campbell's tax cuts brought. Should the BC Liberals be elected and implement their PST elimination, the effect will be just as devastating – or worse. Even former BC Liberal cabinet minister George Abbott now admits to the likely devastation this PST cut would bring when recalling how problematic the cuts were in 2001 under Gordon Campbell's BC Liberals. In fact, he believes it would not be possible to implement this PST elimination without severe cuts to the social ministries ([Former Minister BC Liberal PST Cut](#)). The last piece with respect to core values I would like to touch on is how the parties consider those that have traditionally been fighting to have their voices heard. The blatant homophobia and sexism expressed by Laurie Throness and others within the BC Liberal ranks has gone completely unchecked under the current leadership ([Open Letter Urges Removal of Liberal Chilliwack Kent Candidate](#)). Throness' views on gender and LGBTQ issues have been problematic for some time but have continued without consequence for him – and now he seems to have some company in these views ([BC Liberal Candidate Votes Against Rainbow Crosswalk](#)). Not to be outdone, a few weeks before the election date, we see how BC Liberal leader Andrew Wilkinson has not expressly condemned the sexist (and racist) behaviour of his MLA Jane Thornthwaite, who accused NDP MLA Bowinn Ma for using her sexuality to curry favour with a colleague. Again, very little action followed

from Wilkinson ([The Tyee They Zoomed Then Made It Worse](#)).

The Choice

The BC NDP is not perfect – far from it. I wish the BC NDP had made some different choices during the previous 3.5 years, but the choice is between them and a BC Liberal party that will undoubtedly implement policies to disproportionately favour the wealthy at the expense of social infrastructure for the rest of us.

The BC Greens, you say? There is no chance for any BC Green candidate to successfully win a riding in Metro Vancouver (or the Mainland in general) – their best case scenario is to hold on to the three seats on Vancouver Island. A vote for the BC Greens will not go far enough to prevent a catastrophic outcome the BC Liberals' policies will be sure to bring – only voting for the BC NDP can do that.

As teachers, we will have far more success in advocating for a fair salary increase for ourselves and supports for our students with an NDP government versus a BC Liberal one.

Our community, who knows that austerity for the poor and middle class is not the way out of a pandemic, will have far more success with an NDP government versus a BC Liberal government.

The way to prevent this? Vote NDP.

Is it perfect? No.

But this election, let's not let perfect be the enemy of the good.

Time to remember the best voting advice I have heard -
Voting isn't marriage -
it's public transport.
You are not waiting for "the one" who is absolutely perfect.
You are getting the bus.
And if there isn't one going exactly to your destination, you don't stay at home and sulk - you take the one going closest to where you want to be.