

Friday, May 24, 2019

## Greater Victoria School District celebrates the re-opening of Burnside School

**VICTORIA, BC** – Students, staff and community partners will gather to celebrate the official grand opening of S.J. Burnside, formerly known as Burnside Elementary, on Monday, May 27, 2019. The school will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony along with a salmon feast to honour the land that S.J. Burnside resides on, as well as recognize all of the District’s partners who have collaborated to successfully see the completion of the school project. The historical school site is now completely renovated and seismically upgraded.

The Burnside school was originally built in 1912 and was in need of significant restoration. The School District prioritized the revitalization and seismic upgrade of the school to ensure it was providing the most optimal learning environment for staff and students. The school is now serving the staff and students that were previously located at S.J. Willis. The programming offered includes Continuing Education, The Link and Alternative Education.

“When we started the re-envisioning of Burnside, we believed it would be a great place for school-aged and adult learners. Our vision was to create a bright and inviting space that encouraged people to further pursue their studies and be part of our learning community,” shared Superintendent Shelley Green. “We have now heard from the students on several occasions, how the new facility is encouraging them to come to school every day and learn new things. For us, that is really special.”

The school upgrades include preserving the building’s heritage while introducing new modern learning spaces. The building is now an open concept design with new glass partitions that incorporate original elements such as the fir floors and brick.

While the school is complete, the District still anticipates additional learning spaces for students and a new outdoor green space, which is proposed in a new housing project adjacent to the school. In February 2018, the District entered into an agreement with the City of Victoria and Pacifica Housing to provide affordable housing and to re-open the former Burnside School. For more information on the partnership visit: [www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/media-releases/title/24137/](http://www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/media-releases/title/24137/)

“This partnership is a great example of the kind of creative solutions needed to build complete neighbourhoods,” said Mayor Lisa Helps. “The full project when complete will bring much needed affordable family housing to the community, along with onsite childcare and other important services next to a school and on major transit routes. It’s going to breathe life into ongoing efforts to create a walkable urban village in this area as envisioned in the Burnside neighbourhood plan.”

“The District is proud to be part of an innovative partnership that will benefit our community and assist us in upgrading our facilities,” shared Board Chair Jordan Watters. “The re-opening of Burnside school plays an integral role in supporting the District’s ambitious seismic program. The former S.J. Willis site will now serve as the temporary home for students and staff of schools that are receiving seismic upgrades. We are working on a number of seismic projects, including Victoria High, so we are incredibly fortunate to now have S.J. Willis designated as a swing space.”

Media is invited to celebrate the official re-opening of S.J. Burnside. Building tours available upon request.

**RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY**

WHEN: Monday, May 27, 2019  
12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: S.J. Burnside,  
498 Cecelia Road  
Victoria, BC

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**For more information, please contact:**

Lisa McPhail  
Communications & Community Engagement  
Greater Victoria School District No. 61  
Tel: 250.475.4103

One *Learning* Community

