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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Land secured for five new schools on Burke Mountain

COQUITLAM, B.C., June 16, 2015 – In an unprecedented partnership between School District 43, the Government of British Columbia, City of Coquitlam and private partner Wesbild, land is secured to accommodate five new schools for the fast-growing Burke Mountain community.

At the June 16 community information meeting, residents learned that the partnership secured the land at a fraction of the cost of market value, saving taxpayers money and helping to expedite the provincial new school application process.

The school district secured the following school sites:

- A seven-acre, joint school/park site that benefits students and the community in agreement with the City, to accommodate an elementary school in the Smiling Creek Neighbourhood
- A six-acre, sponsored, provincial Crown grant site for an elementary school in the Partington Creek Neighbourhood (Sheffield)
- A fully-serviced, six-acre site sponsored by Wesbild for an elementary school in the eastern Partington Creek Neighbourhood (Marigold), and
- A large, joint-use site in agreement with the City to accommodate a middle school and a secondary school in the Lower Hyde Creek Neighbourhood. This joint school/park site will also include a \$5-million contribution from Wesbild towards a future synthetic turf field at the site.

To accommodate the urgent need for classroom space on Burke Mountain, the school district is also adding capacity to Irvine and Leigh elementary schools. There is also space available at Coquitlam River Elementary School.

Getting urgent provincial funding to build new schools is the school district's priority. The work done to date allowed the school district to expedite the provincial funding application for Smiling Creek elementary school. The application process is well underway.

A testament to the school district's commitment to expediting the new school process, a Community Neighbourhood Learning Centre consultation and open house for the Smiling Creek Neighbourhood will take place on June 24 at 6 p.m. at Leigh Elementary School. This meeting will share feedback received to date on the Neighbourhood Learning Centre, and invite further feedback. In addition, the open house will include a progress update on the Smiling Creek elementary school design.

Judy Shirra, Board Chair – “We are very proud of our Facilities Team, who have been working relentlessly to address the need for more schools to serve the growing Burke Mountain community. Demand for public investment is high. By securing the land for new schools in an unprecedented partnership, we are on the fast-track to actually get them built. Our priority now is to work with the provincial government to urgently secure the capital funding needed to get shovels in the ground.”

Richard Stewart, Mayor of Coquitlam – “The City of Coquitlam has held steadfast in our commitment to bring partners to the table to help advance the issue of schools on Burke Mountain and today’s announcement is a solid next step in the process. Burke Mountain is a wonderful, vibrant and growing community and we look forward to celebrating along with the neighbourhood when these schools are constructed.”

Kevin Layden, President and CEO, Wesbild – “Wesbild is very pleased to have worked collaboratively with the City of Coquitlam and School District 43 to help bring schools to Burke Mountain. Wesbild builds communities and schools are an integral part of any complete neighbourhood. Our gift of \$5 million towards the track and synthetic field at Burke Mountain will provide another amenity to the residents of Burke Mountain plus a place for our kids to play and grow.”

Douglas Horne, MLA Coquitlam-Burke Mountain – “I am very pleased we have a solid plan to ensure our growing community will have schools for the many young families that now, and in the future, call Burke Mountain home. With all levels of government working closely together I’m confident we will stay on track.”

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