

## Birchland Elementary

Mr. D. Shannon, Principal

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***"We belong. We care. We matter."***

### IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

December	22 - Jan 2	Winter Break
January	5	School reopens
	6	Late French Immersion information session for parents - the Education Learning Centre (ELC) at 7:00pm (see attachment for more information)
	8	Programs of Choice Registration opens at 9:00am
	12, 14	Port Coquitlam Saints Lacrosse lessons for students
	14	Programs of Choice Registration closes 4:00pm
	28	PAC Meeting 7:00pm - 8:30pm
	30	Winter Dance

### Principal's Message - A time to reflect...

In the last week before any break, it is always a suitable time to reflect.

I feel fortunate and honored to be working with and among the professionals at Birchland Elementary. The individuals that make up the staff make it a fun place to be. They are always willing to help out and step in anytime there is a need. They accept new challenges and look at how they can work together to make the most out of it to best benefit your children. For this, they are to be deeply commended. Thank you staff for all that you have done, all that you do, and all that you will continue to do. You make everyday fun! Have a wonderful break!

To the students of Birchland, you continue to teach me about some of the important lessons in life - being a kid and having fun! You make an effort to learn and try new things and do your best to try to reach your potential! Here's wishing you a happy holiday!

To our parents, we could not do what we do without your support. Support shows itself in many ways, and a big part of the reason why our students, your children, succeed is because of this support. Thank you for trusting us with your children and for your belief that what we do makes a difference.

I feel fortunate to have various district staff members in our school to help and assist us when we need them (in particular, Mrs. Scholz, our Speech Language Pathologist, Ms. Myran, our Indigenous Youth Worker, and members of the District IST (Inclusion Support Team)) and relief in the knowledge that they are here for us to provide extra support when and if it is needed. Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

Finally, a special thank you to our PAC. Our PAC works hard to support our school and to provide for our students. We would not be able to provide nearly as much if we didn't have a dedicated group of parents.

Their efforts matter and make a difference in the lives of your children. I thank them for their support and for their gift of time. We are hoping to get even more parents out to assist us, because if we can, there may be more opportunities for all your children.

From all of us at Birchland to all of you, we wish you a happy and safe holiday with family and friends and all the very best in 2026!

Dennis

## **Programs of Choice: French Immersion, Montessori, and Mandarin Bilingual Programs of Choice**

**On-Line Applications for Students entering Kindergarten in September 2026:**

Opens January 8, 2026, at 9am

Closes January 14, 2026, at 4pm

The on-line application link will be posted on the school district website. <http://www.sd43.bc.ca>

Parents must apply in this time period for their child to be considered for a Program of Choice. Selection will be made by a random lottery draw with priority given to younger siblings of students who will be attending the Program of Choice at the same school in September 2026. Kindergarten children who are not successfully placed will be on a waitlist and must register for Kindergarten at their catchment school.

**Parents/ Guardians who currently have a child attending a Program of Choice and wish their upcoming kindergarten child to join must still apply.**

Please ensure the school has your most current address.

For more information on Programs of Choice, please visit:  
[http://www.sd43.bc.ca/Programs/Pages/default.aspx#/="](http://www.sd43.bc.ca/Programs/Pages/default.aspx#/=)

## **Late French Immersion**

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, we had students and a staff member from Citadel Middle come to our school to talk to students about Late French Immersion as an option for Middle School. They left pamphlets (attached with this newsletter). There will be a parent information night at the Education Learning Centre on January 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. See attachment for more information.

## **Community Bookshelf**

We're thrilled to introduce a Community Bookshelf in the front foyer—a cozy spot where stories can be shared and enjoyed by all. Reading together builds literacy, sparks imagination, and strengthens family connections.

Here's how it works: Take a book, leave a book, or simply browse. If you'd like to donate, please make sure your books are appropriate for little eyes—think children's stories, family-friendly reads, or helpful parenting books (no steamy romances, please!).

Every book added helps weave a stronger sense of community. Let's fill this shelf with stories that bring us closer together! Our stories connect us! A big thank you to Mrs. DeReus (Katie) for creating this bookshelf and opportunity!

## Winter Weather – FYI...

Schools are not routinely closed due to snow or other inclement weather conditions. All schools in School District 43 (Coquitlam) will remain OPEN, if possible, during winter weather, including snowfall.

However, on occasion, a district-wide closure, partial-district closure, or delayed start is required due to extreme weather. Partial-district closures affecting individual schools may occur due to the vastly different geography within our school district. If there is a partial-district closure affected schools will be identified.

The decision to keep schools remaining open or needing to be closed, because of extreme weather, occurs **before 6:30 a.m.** so that families can plan and make alternate arrangements.

**Any district-wide or partial-district closure will be decided and communicated by 6:30 a.m. via the School District 43 website [www.sd43.bc.ca](http://www.sd43.bc.ca) and CKNW AM 730 radio, CKWX 1130 radio and CBC (690) radio.**

While the District tries to make the best decision with the information available, the weather does change quickly. Therefore, when schools remain open, decisions to stay at home during challenging weather conditions should be made by each family.

Extreme weather can also impact transit. Transit schedules may face significant changes or cancellations due to the weather conditions. Parents seeking information on transit schedules need to consult the Translink website: <http://www.translink.ca/>

We encourage families to continuously check the School District 43 website for updates and changes: [www.sd43.bc.ca](http://www.sd43.bc.ca)

Learn more about SD43's process for emergency and inclement weather status updates at: <http://www.sd43.bc.ca/NewsEvents/Pages/EmergencyInformation.aspx>