

Burnaby North: Youth In Action

Youth. What do you think of when you hear that word?

Leaders. Inspiration. The future generation.

At Burnaby North, pollution is a critical issue with our large student body of over 2500. Youth are turning their attention towards environmentally sustainable transportation with the support of our staff.

Very few students walk or bike to school due to the number of cars blocking the main roads to our buildings. Daily traffic jams from 8:35-8:50 a.m. and 3:00-3:15 p.m. make it difficult for vehicles to enter and exit our school's traffic zone.

We have reached a conclusion that using hybrid school buses is the most effective solution for reducing pollution. Our committed youth and staff would work towards implementing a bus system, replacing our old school buses with hybrids, and launching a "Green Rides Campaign" promoting bus ridership in our school district.

Burnaby North envisions a new bus system for morning and afterschool rides along with new drop off and pickup locations. These car-restricted areas will encourage more walkers and bikers while providing safety for all students.

Gradually we would have hybrid school buses replace our regular school buses and taxis for activities and fieldtrips. The money our school would save from the eco-transportation system would be dedicated towards green projects or expanding our bus program.

With the help of supportive staff, our Environment Club wants to launch a huge "Green Rides Campaign" that will reach out to the school district, featuring hybrid school buses and emphasizing on how they are the most efficient, safest, and cheapest solution. We plan to test and record the efficiency of our buses to display the environmental benefits as part of a promotion to other schools. Another idea of ours is to install mini TVs on our school buses and show fun and educational environmental videos; being efficient with our time.

In addition to bus ridership, Burnaby North needs to tackle three major environmental problems: waste reduction, energy consumption, and our choice of products.

For waste reduction, multi-purpose bins in every class room would allow students to properly sort their waste. A school district proposal to ban plastic water bottles would encourage students and staff to bring their own water or use fountains. Also, printing on both sides of paper should be a new school policy. To lower our energy consumption, our school needs to switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs, reduce heat loss by increasing insulation, double glazing windows, and reducing drafts. We should invest in energy efficient appliances along with eco-friendly cleaning products, and our cafeteria needs to serve local food while providing biodegradable utensils.

These effective solutions along with hybrid bus ridership require dedication, time, and funding. The students and staff of our school will work together as a team to accomplish our environmental goals.

Believe me when I say, the youth of Burnaby North are *future generation leaders* who have the ability to *inspire* other schools in taking green initiatives.

By Jennifer H.

Burnaby North Secondary
Burnaby, BC