

March 2, 2022

Good evening and welcome.

Although many in our school communities were able to have a bit of a break these last few weeks, this time has also been an incredibly stressful and heartbreaking time, especially for those with family and friends in Ukraine.

Many have been reflecting on how to help, by financially supporting relief efforts in Europe and seeking ways to support efforts closer to home.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has created Europe's largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. With the displacement of millions of Ukrainians, it is a good time to reflect on the system we have in place. Burnaby School District currently has in place a robust SWIS program to support families who have resettled in their schools and communities, and BC and Manitoba are the only two provinces that have settlement workers in schools.

Settlement services have increased significantly and mirror the complex needs of increasing numbers of refugee families requiring support who have overcome great obstacles and adversity in their journey to Canada.

Burnaby has become one of the most robust SWIS programs in the country since its inception in 2007, covering all 49 Burnaby schools, over 18 languages.

SWIS workers across the district support families as ELL and settlement specialists in areas such as:

- Helping parents be included in student home learning by providing language support
- Cultural interpreter support
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