

Charter for Public Education

Public Education is a sacred trust. As a community we promise to prepare learners for a socially responsible life in a free and democratic society, to participate in a world which each generation will shape and build. We promise a public education system which provides learners with knowledge and wisdom, protects and nurtures their natural joy of learning, encourages them to become persons of character, strength and integrity, infuses them with hope and with spirit, and guides them to resolute and thoughtful action.

Everyone has the right to a free, quality public education.

Each first Nation has the right to be recognized and respected by those within the educational institutions located in their traditional territory.

"Education is as necessary as light. It should be as common as water and as free as the air."
—Egerton Ryerson, 1847

We promise:

To recognize that the learner is at the centre of public education.

To offer learners a broad-based education which includes aesthetic, artistic, cultural, emotional, social, intellectual, academic, physical and vocational development in order that they can find and follow their hopes, dreams and passions.

To nurture and value critical thinking so that learners are equipped to be reflective and analytical global citizens.

To respect, encourage and foster the learner's role as a full participant, together with others in the educational community, in developing their own goals, learning activities and curricula.

To create an environment in which each learner can reach their greatest potential, each learning style is affirmed, and the achievements of each learner are measured and assessed accordingly.

To provide a safe and respectful environment for life-long learning which celebrates diversity, embraces the physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual integrity of each individual, recognizes and acknowledges differences and prevents discrimination in all of its forms.

"Any weakening of universal public education can only be a weakening of the long-standing essential role universal public education plays in making us a civilized democracy."

—John Ralston Saul, 2002

We expect:

Government to be responsible for fully funding all aspects of a quality education.

The public education system to guarantee each First Nations learner the right to an education respectful of their history, language and culture.

Learners, parents, early childhood educators, teachers, support staff, administrators, school boards, post-secondary educators, the Government of British Columbia and communities to work in partnership to meet the needs of all learners.

Strong local democratic governance within the provincial education system.

Equitable access for communities to programs, resources, experiences and opportunities for learners, regardless of geographic location or socio-economic status.

These principles reflect the consensus heard during public hearings across British Columbia, Canada, 2002–03.

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