

## IPE/BC NEWS

### Public Education is a Public Interest



#### Many new faces on school boards province-wide

As [reported by the BC School Trustees' Association](#), the recent local elections resulted in 158 brand new public school trustees being elected, over a third of the total number in BC. With the elections now over, it's up to all of us who have a keen interest in public education to connect with trustees and encourage their advocacy for a quality, well-funded, accessible public school system. Supporting these local leaders in actively using their agency throughout their term is as important as heading to the polls on election day. As a start, you may want to consider sharing the [IPE/BC Vision, Mission and Principles](#) with trustees in your area to open a discussion on the value of a strong, inclusive public education system.

#### Newly elected young trustees committed to bringing their recent school experiences to their role

In the recent CBC article, [Young school trustees-elect say they have experience to make public education better](#), newly elected trustees, Gabe Liosis (21) and Jo Kang (24), speak about the perspectives they can bring to their school boards. Ready to hit the ground running, Liosis and Kang, are keen to use their personal history of engagement and their relatively recent public school experiences in their new roles. Kang already has plans to propose a summit with reps from the Ministry of Education, the Kamloops Thomson School District, and the Kamloops city council to discuss improved public school funding.

## 5 Myths about Public School funding—a workshop



Making sense of education finance was a popular topic among participants at the BC Teachers' Federation summer training conference for its local officers. A crowd showed up for an IPE/BC workshop on “5 Myths about Public School Funding” presented by John Malcolmson and Larry Kuehn, members of the IPE/BC board of directors.

The 5 Myths outlined by the facilitators were:

### ***Myth 1: Actual education costs determine funding levels.***

Funding provided by government is ultimately based on political priority decisions, not necessarily based on an assessment of how much it would actually cost to meet all educational needs.

### ***Myth 2: Funding levels have shot up, outpacing inflation and the underlying cost of delivering services.***

Costs have gone up, reflecting not just inflation, but to a large degree because demands for types of services and educational supports have increased substantially. Expenditures on public education have actually declined both as a share of the provincial budget and the gross domestic product (GDP).

### ***Myth 3: Maintaining tight controls on spending has had no adverse consequences for BC public schools.***

Not all educational needs can be met, particularly for students with special needs. Wage and salary levels of school employees have fallen in real terms making it difficult to attract needed teachers and support personnel. School facility maintenance has not been adequately maintained everywhere.

### ***Myth 4: Funding follows the individual student.***

While the number of students brings funding to a district, it isn't attached to an individual student. Even when funding resulting from a particular student being identified with a special need produces funding for a district, the district can make use of those funds to assist other students as well.

### ***Myth 5: The funding system as it exists produces equity for all students.***

The funding system has many features aimed at providing equity among districts. However, that equity is undermined by differences in ability of districts to raise extra funds through international student tuition and inequality in the ability of school communities to raise supplementary funding.

Workshop presentations provided facts and details to support the claim for each being a myth. If you want more of the details, you might consider booking this workshop for your group with IPE/BC.

**Note:** We've created a [handout on these five myths](#) and hope that you'll share it with your contacts. We've also promoted it on Facebook and Twitter (@PublicEdBC) and invite you to share these posts as well.

### **Big ideas in The Little Education Report**

Kudos to Doug Little, author of [The Little Education Report](#), for his recent round-up of education and politics coast to coast to coast in Canada. Doug has taught at every level in the Ontario school system and has served as a school trustee. He's also an experienced education writer and was a co-founder, editor, and contributor to *Our Schools Ourselves*.

### **Welcoming our newest IPE/BC Fellow**



We're very pleased to welcome Bárbara Silva to the cadre of [IPE/BC Fellows](#).

Bárbara Silva is a public education advocate, organizer, and activist. She holds a degree in Chemical Engineering and Education and has worked in both fields but is most passionate about building support for an equitable and accessible public education system and creating awareness about the proliferation of privatization across Canada. In 2015, Bárbara co-founded the citizen-run public education advocacy organization Support Our Students Alberta, which led several campaigns and rallies in defence of public education across the province. As an experienced public speaker, she was

widely sought after as a go-to media source and presenter for issues around public education in the province. Bárbara's advocacy is based on the right of every child to a universally accessible public education.

### Why are our tax dollars still funding private schools?



As you'll know, IPE/BC holds the position that tax dollars should be funding public education, not handed over to private schools. This year, provincial subsidies to private schools in BC will increase to \$491 million. This funding is in addition to the property tax exemptions, tax breaks on tuition and donations, and a child tax credit on a portion of private school tuition attributed to supervision of students at recess and lunch.

Adjusted for inflation, the amount allocated to private schools by the province this year is more than double what it was in 2000/2001. At the same time, public schools continue to try to cope with inadequate funding and unmet needs. Imagine what could be done if these monies were redirected to public schools instead.

To go a little deeper on this issue, check out:

- the [CCPA Policy Note](#) published with permission on the IPE/BC website,
- Alex Hemingway's article in the Vancouver Sun, [Private schools receive public funds while special-needs students go without](#), published earlier this month.
- the Tye's coverage of Alex's report, [Why are public dollars for private schools rising?](#), published in September.
- Marsha Lederman's opinion piece in the Globe and Mail, [Religious schools can be good but they shouldn't get public funds](#), also from September.

### Perspectives Blog Posts

Thank you very much to Patti Bacchus for the excellent recent blog post, [Do school board elections really matter?](#) Next up, Bárbara Silva will be writing about the fallacy of choice and folly of privatization in public education. Do you have a topic you'd like to suggest, or a blog post you'd like to contribute? We'd certainly welcome hearing from you.

## IPE/BC Occasional Papers

From time to time, IPE/BC publishes Occasional Papers devoted to critical issues in public education. We posted a new paper drafted by Dr. Larry Kuehn, IPE/BC Board member, and titled, [When the BC government refused education for Japanese Canadian children, Hideko Hyodo and the community created an alternative](#). Larry researched the treatment of Japanese students and teachers in this dark period in BC's history and has highlighted the extremely challenging work undertaken by Hyodo and others to ensure that the children and youth did not lose out on their education while in internment camps.

Additionally, John Malcolmson has updated his extensive research on the impact of years of the mandate restricted bargaining applied to public education teachers and support staff. The paper, [Inflation, bargaining and the threat to labour peace in schools](#) was originally published last April and updated in September.

## Planning Session



Thanks very much to the Fellows who joined the Board members in a strategic planning session to review the IPE/BC mission, principles, and goals last June. The Board is in the process of adopting revised wording to reflect changes discussed and will bring those to your attention in the next newsletter.

## Student Press Freedom Act Campaign

“The SPFA is Canada’s first student journalism protection legislation, intended to be passed by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The Act was primarily drafted by high school student journalists in response to their experience with censorship, with significant assistance from lawyers and advocates across Canada.”

For an inspiring example of leadership and civic engagement, please check out the [Student Press Freedom Act Campaign](#). Campaign Co-Directors, Spenser Izen and

Jessica Kim, are recent graduates of Eric Hamber Secondary School and have drawn on their experiences editing the dynamic school newspaper, The Griffin's Nest. You can read the full text of the proposed act [here](#) and check out the media coverage to date [here](#).

The IPE/BC Board has endorsed the campaign, adding the institute's name to the very impressive [list of organizations](#) that have already indicated their support.

### Public education – key to creating a better world



#### [Educators and critical pedagogy: an antidote to authoritarianism](#)

*"It is crucial to remember that education should be a place where students realize themselves as critical citizens, education is seen as a public good, and education enables the conditions to enable them to speak, write, and act from a position of agency and empowerment."*

Dr. Henry A. Giroux. McMaster University Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest ,  
October 16, 2022

#### [Teach the Teacher- students and teachers join forces for climate education](#)

"Climate change is the single biggest issue that will affect us today and in the future. As young people, we need to be taught about the crisis at hand, the solutions, and how we can make a difference. We deserve to learn about the issue that will define our future."

Education International, September 27, 2022

#### [Reckoning with the history of public schooling and settler colonialism](#)

*"The TRC stressed that we must have truth before reconciliation. Part of the "[complex truth](#)" is understanding that public schooling has also played an important role in settler colonialism in Canada."*

Sean Carleton, Departments of History and Indigenous Studies, University of Manitoba,  
The Conversation, September 26, 2022

## [USask research informing decision on national school food program](#)

*“All children, regardless of their background, spend a large portion of their waking hours at school—an ideal setting to improve dietary quality and reduce health inequities.”*

Dr. Rachael Engler-Stringer, Professor Community Health and Epidemiology, University of Saskatchewan

**Coming soon**

Watch for more information on Our Hopes and Dreams for Public Education, a new IPE/BC interactive project to be launched this year. It promises to be a profound and highly engaging conversation on our vision for public education in BC.

**Sharing the news**



We circulate this newsletter by email and post it on [our website](#). Please share it with others and invite them to [subscribe](#).