

IPE/BC News

Public Education is a Public Good



Save the date

On March 7th from 7:00-9:00 pm IPE/BC will be holding its AGM and Forum. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Dan Laitsch, Dean, Faculty of Education, SFU. We're busy finalizing our plans and will be posting and circulating a special bulletin giving you all the details. Please save the date and watch for more information coming soon.

Looking ahead to February 22nd- BC Budget Day



The BC Legislature resumes sitting on February 20th, with the Speech from the Throne being introduced that day. Just two days later, the provincial budget will be tabled. We're hoping that public education will feature as a key budget priority. The need for increased funding in our public schools has become acute, with teacher shortages, inadequate support for students with diverse learning needs, overcrowding, and a lag in the capital funding process all undermining quality, accessible, inclusive education in BC.

When IPE/BC researcher John Malcolmson analyzed last year's education budget, he found that the new education monies were mostly allocated to covering existing cost pressures. In fact, of the \$625 million increase announced, \$568 million had already been committed.

Our submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, for consideration in the 2024 budget, called for government to:

- address the serious teacher shortage that is putting the quality of public education at risk,
- act on the need to revise the system for capital planning and building approvals in order to ensure a forward-looking approach, and
- meet the need for increased funding for post-secondary education.

The Budget 2024 consultation process was the first time that the legislative committee limited submissions to just three recommendations; there were many other priorities that we could have included, of course. [The recommendations in our previous years' submissions still stand as very important areas to address.](#)

Public Dollars for Public Schools



Speaking of education funding, IPE/BC is firmly of the belief that [public tax dollars should not be funding private schools](#). We acknowledge that, for a variety of reasons, private schooling is an option that some parents/caregivers may want to choose but we don't believe that choice should be funded with public monies. In the 2022/23 school year alone, private schools in BC received \$491 million in public funding. The increases in government funding to private schools over the last twenty years far outstripped the rate of growth in public school funding. This handover of public funds is in addition to the property tax exemptions for private schools, the tax breaks on tuition and donations, and the childcare tax credit on a portion of tuition attributed to recess and lunch supervision.

IPE/BC believes that public education is a public good; a strong public school system is a cornerstone of a strong democracy and, as such, it should be well supported with public tax dollars.

Congratulations to Steve Cardwell

IPE/BC is very pleased to announce that Steve Cardwell has been elected as the new IPE/BC Chairperson. Steve has extensive experience in education, having served as a secondary school teacher, Superintendent of Schools in Delta and Vancouver School Districts, and Vice-President, Student Services, Kwantlen Polytechnic University. He has always valued ethical, empathetic leadership and fostered strong working relationships. In 2013 Steve was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal for his outstanding service to education and in 2022, the KPU Foundation created a scholarship in his name to support marginalized students. IPE/BC is very fortunate to have Steve in the chairperson's role.

Thank you to Christine Ho Youngusband

We're very grateful to Christine Ho Youngusband for stepping in to chair the IPE/BC Board throughout the fall. Christine brought wide experience in education (as a secondary school teacher,

school trustee and assistant professor at UNBC), excellent leadership skills, and a deep commitment to effective teamwork to the role. Thank you very much to Christine for such dedicated service to IPE/BC.

Putting a priority on a national school food program



While education is a provincial responsibility in Canada, IPE/BC feels strongly that a universal national school food program is long overdue. Recently, federal Bill C-201, to establish a framework for such a program, passed second reading and was referred to the committee stage. The issue is that, while more and more children and their families/caregivers are struggling with the cost of food, neither the actual program nor the funding is yet in place. The concept has been under discussion by government since 2019 and, in that time, food insecurity has become a growing concern throughout the country.

In BC's 2023 education budget, the provincial government allocated additional funding to support the patchwork of programs in currently place, however a stable universal program at every school in every province and territory is the ideal.

For more information and resources, see [The Coalition for Healthy School Food](#) and [its BC chapter](#). In [our 2022 submission to the BC Budget consultation process](#), IPE/BC spoke about the impact of hunger on learning and called for guaranteed funding for school meal programs.

Reaching out and making connections

IPE/BC has been busy building connections in support of a quality, inclusive public education system. Since we reported in our last newsletter, we have:

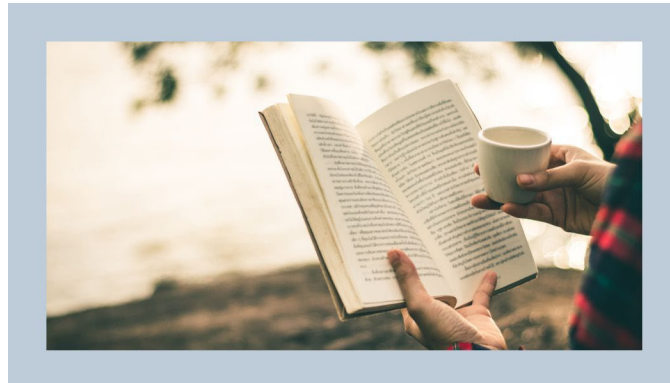
- presented to the First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society. David Chudnovsky, IPE/BC board member, spoke about the IPE and the Hopes and Dreams for Public Education project and engaged participants in sharing their aspirations for children and youth in our public schools.
- conducted a workshop and staffed an information table at AdvoCon, a rich and informative conference organized by BCEdAccess and People First BC. Christine Ho Youngusband facilitated the workshop and Christine and Moira Mackenzie, IPE/BC Board member, engaged in many rewarding conversations at the table. With Tracy Humphries of BCEdAccess, Annabree Fairweather and Andrée Gacoin, who also happen to be IPE Fellows, facilitated a workshop on education funding and access to supports.

-introduced the IPE and the Hopes and Dreams project to the Vancouver and District Labour Council. David Chudnovsky, who leads this project, made the presentation and discussed the opportunities to participate.

-put plans in place to have an information table and talk with teacher representatives about their aspirations and challenges at the upcoming BCTF Representative Assembly meeting.

If you're part of organizing a conference, meeting, or other event, please consider IPE/BC in your planning. We'd certainly appreciate the opportunity to engage with your organization and its participants.

Teaching where you are



Congratulations to Shannon Leddy and her co-author, Lorrie Miller, on their recently published book, *Teaching Where You Are: Weaving Indigenous and Slow Principles and Pedagogies*. [Dr. Shannon Leddy](#) is an Associate Professor, Indigenous Education, in UBC's Faculty of Education, a writer, teacher and IPE/BC Fellow. As described by [Strong Nations](#), this book "offers a guide for non-Indigenous educators to work in good ways with Indigenous students and provides resources across curricular areas to support all students. In this book, two seasoned educators, one Indigenous and one settler, bring to bear their years of experience teaching in elementary, secondary and post-secondary contexts to explore ways in which Indigenous and Slow approaches to teaching and learning mirror and compliment each other."

Our Hopes and Dreams for Public Education in BC



We're very pleased that the CCPA featured IPE/BC's Hopes and Dreams community engagement project in the [Policy Note published on January 11th](#). Additionally, Radio CFRO focused on the project

in an [interview with Bárbara Silva, IPE/BC board member, on December 16th](#). Thank you very much to the CCPA and Coop Radio.

If you haven't had a chance to [learn all about the project yet](#), please check it out. We'd appreciate it very much if you'd take just a few minutes to join the conversation and send in your perspectives, using the handy form on this project webpage. We are reaching out to all British Columbians and are committed to publishing a thorough report on our findings when we conclude the engagement phase.

Children and housing insecurity

When children and youth show up to their neighbourhood public schools each day, they bring with them their worries and the anxieties their families/caregivers may be facing in struggling to meet basic needs. Housing and food insecurity present incredible challenges that inevitably undermine young people's well-being, health, confidence, and ability to focus on learning. First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society has recently published a new report, "Failure to Protect: The Denial of Children's Right to Housing in BC," which provides an in-depth look at the obstacles to secure housing now faced by many and detailed recommendations for proactive change. You can read the full report [here](#).

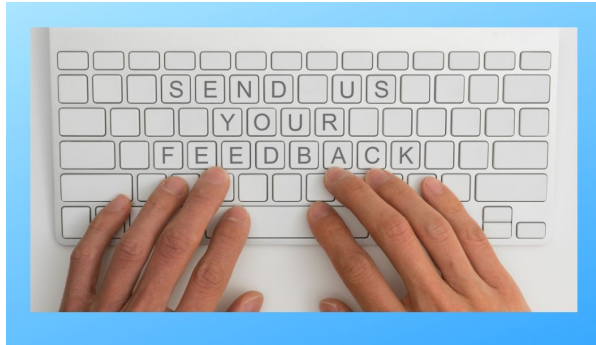
International students - exposing the vulnerabilities



On January 15th, The Tyee published a powerful article titled, "[Cash Cows and Cheap Labour: The Plight of International Students](#)", in which they describe the exploitation of these young people once they are recruited to attend post-secondary institutes in BC. Not only are the institutes, much like many school boards, relying on this precarious source of funding, the students themselves are left open to exploitation once they are here. Jenny Francis, a professor of geography at Langara College who undertook a three year study of international students, concluded that they are the new temporary foreign workers, without adequate means to meet high living costs in BC and often working long hours without protections. Dale McCartney, a professor of political science at the University of the Fraser Valley who studies international student policies, reports that Canada has been dependent on migrant student labour for at least twenty years and has created "a very terrible situation."

The full article is well worth reading. In addition, you might want to refer to [Brief 4, On Revenue and Expenditures in BC's Research Universities, in the CUFA-BC series of briefs on post-secondary funding in BC](#), to learn more about the folly in increased reliance on tuition from international students. IPE/BC has also spoken out about [K-12 funding reliance on international student fees and the resulting inequality](#) between school districts that it has created.

Connect with us



We'd really appreciate hearing from you. Do you have suggestions and feedback for us? Would you like to write a blog post on an education issue that's important to you? Are there publications that you think we should include in our IPE/BC Commons? Would you like to contribute a book review for publication on our website? Don't hesitate to get in touch at info@publicedbc.ca

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