

Institute for Public Education/BC Questions for Candidates for MLA

1. **Funding:** B.C. has fallen behind the rest of Canada in how it funds its public schools. The only province that spends less of its GDP on education is Newfoundland and Labrador. B.C. 's relative contribution to public school budgets has fallen significantly over the period from year 2000 to the present, from the perspective of what the province can afford.

Note: For the 2023/24 school financial year, B.C. reports spending grants of \$6,754 million across the province's 60 school districts. If B.C. were to spend at the "% of PDP" rate found for the year 2000, this budgetary allocation would increase by \$3.8 billion to \$10.552 billion.

What will you do to increase funding to B.C.'s public schools, to ensure students receive the opportunities and supports their counterparts in other provinces are able to access?

2. **Staffing:** B.C. schools are struggling with an urgent shortage of qualified teachers and special education support workers. This is shortchanging students and putting increased stress on school employees, making it difficult to retain them.

What will you do to recruit and retain teachers and education support workers?

3. **Facilities:** The Ministry of Education is forecasting significant enrolment growth in B.C.'s public schools, yet many districts already have overcrowded schools and not enough space for all in-catchment students. Hundreds of B.C. schools are still at high risk of significant structural damage in the event of an earthquake.

How would you ensure B.C.'s students have access to safe, neighbourhood schools, in a timely way?

4. **Reconciliation:** Historically and statistically, Indigenous students have had poorer outcomes in school due to Canada's history of colonialism, discrimination and in particular, residential schools.

What will you do to ensure Indigenous students receive educational opportunities and supports to enable their success in B.C.'s public schools?

5. **Inclusion and safety:**

How will you ensure schools are safe, inclusive and welcoming for all students, and how will you support and protect programs that educate and support students regarding sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), and other anti-discriminatory programs and practices?



