

IPE/BC News

Public Education is a Public Good



A new school year underway

IPE/BC wishes all students, teachers, support staff, administrators, trustees and parent/caregivers a very rewarding and happy school year. We know that incredible work is done every day, often under very difficult conditions. We'll keep speaking out on behalf of quality, inclusive, accessible and well-supported public schools. Public education truly is a public good.

Letter of concern sent to the Premier and Minister of Education and Childcare



On June 23rd, IPE/BC wrote to Premier Eby and Minister Singh to express concern about the underfunding of public education in BC. BC now ranks second from the bottom when it comes to the percentage of GPP spend on education in each of the provinces and territories. We received a reply from the Deputy Education Minister on August 7th, however we did not feel that the

response addressed the issues we raised. Therefore, we felt compelled to send a follow up letter, urging government to address the critical need for an increase in public school funding in BC. The correspondence is posted for your information [here](#).

New Perspectives Blog posts for you

If you haven't already done so, please check out our recent Perspectives Blog posts:

- [Gone Forever- The folly of selling off public school properties by Rory Brown](#)

Why is it never a good idea to permanently hand public school property over to private interests? Previous pressure to close and sell off schools is having a big impact as school boards are struggling to address overcrowding today.

- [Public school enrolment expected to surge in the fall of 2024 by John Malcolmson](#)
How many more students are expected in BC's public schools this fall? Which districts will see the highest enrolment increases? How will this impact a system already under pressure?

- [Public education should be free by Larry Kuehn](#)

In 2006, Victoria trustee John Young won his court case contending that charging fees in public schools was contrary to provincial law. What happened next and why are public school still charging fees?

- [NATO's 2 percent and public school funding by John Malcolmson.](#)

Just imagine what Canada's public schools could do with an additional \$1.67 billion in additional funding every year. When it comes to allocating our tax dollars, it really is a matter of choice and will.

Watch for new posts coming this fall on the importance of free speech/expression in schools and universities and the impact of support staff shortages. If you would like to write a post or have a suggestion for a topic to address, please contact us at info@publicedbc.ca.

Public Education Exchange



Have you heard about the Public Education Exchange? PEX "advocates for public schools that are equitable, accessible, publicly funded, democratically governed, and in pursuit of the

common good.” It’s a great network for researchers, advocates, educators and interested members of the public to create and share knowledge about education privatization and its impact. You can read more about it and find out how to join [here](#).

Speaking of private players

As you’ll know, IPE/BC believes that our public tax dollars should go to public schools. For the 2024/25 school year, private schools in BC will receive \$571 million, an increase of 14.5% over the previous year. In addition, private schools receive property tax exemptions, tax breaks on donations and tuition, and a child care tax credit on a portion of tuition attributed to recess and lunch supervision. This article, [Not hidden but not visible: Government funding of private schools in Canada](#), will give you a very good idea of tax benefits given to private schools and their clientele, and the lack of democratic accountability, with a particular focus on BC.

BCRTA features IPE/BC project

Thanks very much to the BC Retired Teachers’ Association for including an article on [IPE/BC’s Hopes and Dreams](#) project in [Postscript](#) magazine. We know that retired teachers have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share and we’re looking forward to hearing from them.

IPE/BC recognized with national award



We are pleased to report that the Institute for Public Education/BC was the recipient of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation’s [Public Education Advocacy Award for 2024](#). Our Board of Directors is very grateful to the CTF and to the BCTF for nominating our institute for this prestigious recognition. IPE/BC Chairperson Steve Cardwell was honored to receive the award in person at the CTF’s Annual General Meeting, held in Vancouver this year. In his address to the meeting, Steve said, “As you all know, advocacy for public education is a constant struggle. There are times when we feel weary and without capacity. However, this award gives us renewed strength and boosts our morale. Even more, it reinvigorates our commitment to

ensuring that each and every child receives high quality, and freely accessible education that is welcoming and inclusive.”

Thank you very much, Canadian Teachers' Federation.

IPE/BC reaching out and making connections

Since we last reported to you, we've been busy talking about education with many organizations and groups, sharing concerns and hearing about people's hopes and dreams for public schools, including:

- presenting a workshop at Inclusion BC's *Everybody Belongs* conference and at the BCTF's Summer Leadership Conference.

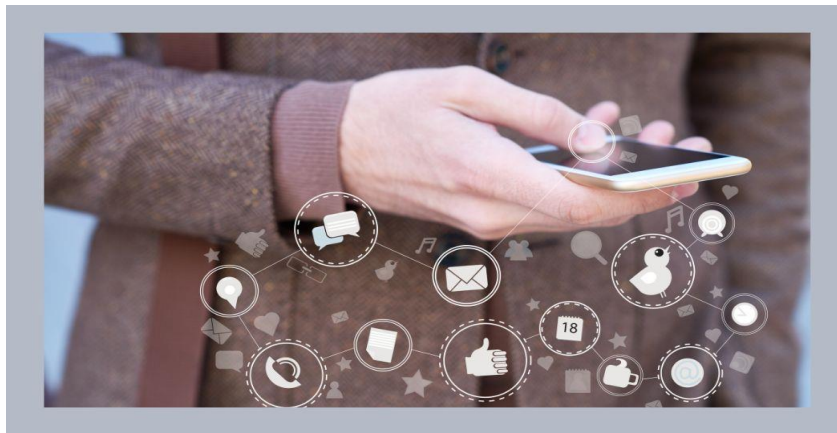
- holding discussions with trustees, teachers, and the public in Nanaimo.

- hearing from teachers in Chilliwack and Surrey.

- staffing an outreach booth at BCCPAC's Spring Conference, the Public Education Conference and the Metro Vancouver Labour Day Celebration hosted by the NWDLC and the VDLC.

We're very grateful for these opportunities. Talking to others about public schools, the challenges they face, and the aspirations we have in common certainly grounds IPE's work and informs the projects and research we undertake. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you or your organization would like to hear from us at an upcoming meeting or event.

Stay connected, share the news



We hope you'll pass this newsletter on to others and invite them to subscribe by contacting us at info@publicedbc.ca. Be sure to get in touch if you'd like to share education news, give us feedback or get involved. We'd love to hear from you.



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