

Responses by Electoral District

Cariboo-Chilcotin

- **Michael Moses, BC New Democratic Party**

Thanks for the questionnaire. As I'm sure you know, we candidates are door-knocking all across the Cariboo Chilcotin for the next three weeks, meeting voters and discussing all sorts of topics, including public education. Our NDP Comms Team has prepared an excellent summary of the items on education in our platform and I'd be pleased to chat with voters on these topics at any time.

Courtenay-Comox

- **Ronna-Rae Leonard, BC New Democratic Party**

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

The BC NDP is taking action to give our kids the quality education they deserve - building new and expanded schools and investing in our kids. There is more on the way, with a record capital budget over next three years for new and expanded schools.

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

The BCNDP have hired over 5,700 new teachers and achieved the smallest class sizes in a decade, giving our kids more space and more attention to help them learn.

How will you ensure that B.C.'s students have timely access to safe, neighbourhood schools?

There will be 125 new, expanded and seismically upgraded schools built or underway for more than 70,000 students. There is more on the way, with a record capital budget over next three years for new and expanded schools.

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

Advance Indigenous education and training opportunities, including the preservation and revitalization of First Nations languages and cultural heritage.

How will you ensure schools are safe, inclusive and welcoming for all students? 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?

SOGI is NOT a specific curriculum, sex-ed, or sexually explicit books.

SOGI is not about teaching anyone to be a certain sexual orientation or gender. It's simply about teaching kids to respect people who are different.

Parents always have the right to take their kid out of sex-ed.

The province does not manage the content of libraries across the province - that's up to the school boards. We expect books to be age-appropriate, and anyone with concerns about a specific book should follow up with their school board.

Fraser-Nicola

- **Jonah Timms, BC Green Party**

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

Education is the foundation of a healthy society, yet it has been consistently deprioritized by consecutive governments in British Columbia. Teacher shortages, reduced funding for special education and rising operating costs are having a heavy impact on students. When schools are inadequately funded and students spend their education years in portables, a clear message is sent to our youth: we are not investing in you. Despite persistent and visible inequities, no BC government has adequately addressed these issues in over two decades.

Every public school should be a place where students, educators and staff feel safe, included, welcome and cared for. When this happens, optimal learning follows. Students cannot succeed in environments marked by scarcity and insecurity—and our schools must be fully equipped to meet their needs and those of the educators who support them. The BC Greens will modernize operational funding and increase grants for school districts to ensure every school has the resources to meet instructional and student support needs.

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

The BC Greens are committed to strengthening the education workforce by providing financial support, fair compensation, and streamlined processes for educators. We will:

- Provide paid final practicums for teachers and ECEs, offering financial support during their essential training periods.
- Simplify the certification process for teachers from other provinces or countries to attract more qualified educators to BC.
- Develop bursaries for educators who commit to serving in remote districts, and increase funding for rural and remote teacher education programs to address workforce shortages.
- Ensure EAs receive fair compensation and increased hours, ensuring they earn a living wage and have job security.
- Pursue loan forgiveness programs for teachers, ECEs, and EAs as part of broader post-secondary support initiatives.

How will you ensure that B.C.'s students have timely access to safe, neighbourhood schools?

The BC Greens will modernize public school funding and infrastructure to support student success. We will undertake comprehensive reforms in facilities management to ensure all schools meet high standards of safety, functionality, and climate resilience.

And we will collaborate across ministries and the construction industry to create pre-approved universal school building designs, which will be reevaluated every 10 years to ensure they meet climate-resilient standards.

- Universal school building designs can be scaled to the predicted number of students. The current school design process is costly and lengthy. Due to the additional steps – requests for proposals from architects, contractors, and other construction professionals – this can vastly slow down the building process and increase costs. With universal, pre-approved designs, we can ensure schools are built as quickly, efficiently, and safely as

possible.

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

Indigenous students need what all students need: access to learning and resources that support them to thrive. We are ensuring that all schools in BC are well-resourced – with educators, support staff, mental health professionals, funding, and technology to meet the needs of students. Schools have been underfunded and under-resourced for decades – especially rural and remote jurisdictions, where there are higher numbers of Indigenous students.

We are committed to equipping students with the tools and resources they need to thrive – with a targeted focus on populations who have been marginalized. The school system should be one that creates the conditions for all students to feel included, and succeed – we are committed to making this vision a reality.

How will you ensure schools are safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all students? 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?

We will continue supporting and expanding the SOGI 123 initiative to create inclusive school environments that support LGBTQ+ students and address issues of gender identity and sexual orientation.

We will expand awareness and education campaigns for disability and accessibility in elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions. These campaigns will focus on creating safer and more inclusive learning environments for students with disabilities and raising awareness about ableism and its harmful effects.

Kelowna-Lake Country-Coldstream

- **Tara Armstrong, Conservative Party of BC**

Thank you very much for reaching out. As the election nears and multiple requests come in for surveys, town halls and other items, we're asking that these requests be sent to our central campaign by filling out the form below. By doing so, we'll be in a better place to understand the priorities of our constituents. [Conservative Party of BC Stakeholder Form \(google.com\)](#)

- **Anna Warwick Sears, BC New Democratic Party**

Thanks for taking the time to email me about my campaign for BC MLA in Kelowna-Lake Country-Coldstream. I, or one of my volunteers, will be in touch as soon as possible. Thanks for your patience!

Kelowna Centre

- **Loyal Woodward, BC New Democratic Party**

Thank you for connecting with me and the BC NDP Kelowna Centre campaign. Our campaign is fuelled by volunteers, we will be in touch with you as soon as possible. Thank you for your patience!

Langley-Walnut Grove

- **Megan Dykeman, BC New Democratic Party**
What will you do to increase funding to B.C.'s public schools to ensure students receive the opportunities and supports that their counterparts in other provinces are able to access?

British Columbia is growing rapidly. We added 180,000 people to our province just last year, including many who are arriving with children and need access to schools. Every child deserves a strong start, and investing in K-12 education is how we build a brighter future for our kids and our communities. Since forming government, we have increased funding for school boards by 55%, to support them to meet the increasing demands for additional services to support kids, parents and families. This is a strong contrast with previous governments which cut support for school boards when the families they serve needed it most.

David Eby and the BC NDP are taking action to give our kids the quality education they deserve. With the largest school food program in the province's history, we're ensuring that students are well-fed and ready to learn. And, for families who need extra help, we're taking action to cover the costs of school supplies and class trips, as well as sports and music programs. We are bringing more care into schools by launching School Outreach Teams for Children and Youth with Support Needs, providing rural and remote school districts access to specialist staff to support families. In addition, we have launched K-12 literacy screening and learning supports, helping all students, especially those with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, get the support they need to achieve their best.

We will continue to work in partnership with school boards, by providing additional capital funding for school expansion and for new school projects to meet the needs of growing populations. We will make sure schools have the funding and support needed to build and maintain our schools for generations to come.

And we have invested in Langley's education - adding over 5,000 new student spaces in our Township alone, including fast modular additions to existing schools & three brand new schools: Smith Secondary, Smith Middle, and North East Latimer Elementary.

As an elected official, I will advocate on behalf of Langley to ensure these commitments are expanded. I will always have the backs of Langley teachers, students and schools.

Our commitments stand in stark contrast to those of our opponents. John Rustad proposes to address our growing population by increasing class sizes by at least 20% – which will lead to worse learning outcomes for kids, and greater challenges for teachers and support workers to maintain control in the classroom while providing support for children with additional needs. And the last time he was in office, his government froze school construction funding for eight straight years as the province grew rapidly, causing a massive

deficit of school spaces. In short, the BC Conservatives' proposals to solve this problem are no solution at all.

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

workers? Beginning in 2017, the BC NDP committed to hiring more teachers, especially in fast growing and rural school districts. Our province has grown by more than 300,000 people in the last two years under Ottawa's immigration programs. That's why we are building new schools and hiring more teachers — over 5700 new teachers so far — to ensure our kids have supportive learning environments.

David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to hiring more teachers and educational assistants — because that allows for more one-on-one time and delivers better student results. We will keep making schools work better by getting more teachers into the classroom by creating a faster pathway to teacher certification for adults already working on-call in BC schools and attracting more teachers to high-need areas of the province through incentive programs.

In our Action Plan for You, we are committed to:

- Increasing support for students in the critical kindergarten to grade 3 years by staffing each classroom with an education assistant to support complex needs, and to support before- and after-school care programs.
- Ensuring every public school has a mental health counsellor - freeing up principals and teachers to do the work they're trained to do and making sure our kids can get help before small problems become big ones.
- Increasing support for kids with learning disabilities and their families by working with teachers to identify kids who are struggling early and support those kids with strategies to learn, as well as expanding services and interventions for kids with dyslexia and other learning differences.

John Rustad's government closed 267 schools when he was in government, and fought with teachers all the way to the Supreme Court to try to increase class sizes. And he's on record calling for a 20% increase in class sizes. That is the opposite of what is needed in BC - we can't afford that.

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

As an elected official, I have strongly advocated for the students of Langley both in my nine years on the Langley Board of Education as a Trustee/Chair, and over the last four years as MLA.

I will continue to be a tireless advocate for increased funding for Langley teachers, students and schools to ensure that public education is supported, and to continue to build the infrastructure required to keep up with our ongoing growth.

In addition to infrastructure, this includes hiring more teachers and Education Assistants (EAs), and providing necessary classroom supports to create an inclusive and high-quality education system.

The BC NDP has a strong track record of investing in teachers and education. John Rustad has said he wants to increase class sizes by 20% which will only negatively impact

children's learning environment. I will continue to push for resources to meet the needs of all students and staff.

Our government has shown up for Langley:

- We invested in a [200-seat expansion at Nicomekl Elementary](#).
- We broke ground on the [new Willoughby Elementary school](#), expected to be ready in 2025.
- We purchased the sites and invested in a [new Willoughby Secondary](#), a [new Smith neighbourhood middle school](#) and an [addition for R.E. Mountain Secondary](#).
- We invested in 150 new spaces and 6 more classrooms for [Richard Bulpitt Elementary School](#).
- We invested in 150 new student seats at [Lynn Fripps Elementary](#) through a six-classroom prefabricated addition
- We have begun construction on a safer, expanded [Peter Ewart Middle School](#) adding 11 more classrooms and 275 seats, creating a total of 900 seismically upgraded seats at the school.
- We invested in a 300-seat school expansion at [Langley Secondary School](#).
- We invested in a [new 555-seat elementary school](#) for the northeastern Latimer neighbourhood.
- We seismically upgraded [Shortreed Elementary](#)
- We seismically upgraded [Vanguard Secondary](#), replacing a two-storey classroom building.
- We opened [Donna Gabriel Robins Elementary](#), a 550 seat school that includes a neighbourhood learning centre with almost 100 new child care spaces.
- We opened [R.E. Mountain Secondary](#) opened, adding 1,700 new spaces
- We built 6 new accessible playgrounds through the Playground Equipment Program (PEP) at [Shortreed Elementary](#), [Glenwood Elementary](#), Nicomekl Elementary, [Topham Elementary](#), [West Langley Elementary](#) and Parkside Centennial Elementary.

John Rustad, by contrast, closed 267 schools when he was in government, and fought with teachers all the way to the Supreme Court to try to increase class sizes. And he's on record calling for a 20% increase in class sizes. We can't afford that.

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

BC is our home. We all want to build a good life here – and for too long, court rulings have created uncertainty across the province, and First Nations have been denied their rights. Real reconciliation means working together and finding a path forward that works for everyone. David Eby and the BC NDP are proud that in 2019 BC was the first jurisdiction in Canada to formally adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act with the unanimous support from all MLAs.

Reconciliation is a shared responsibility and partnerships between all levels of government are fundamental to improve life for everyone. In 2018, our NDP government signed a tripartite educational agreement between the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Province and the Government of Canada. Kindergarten through Grade 12 curriculum has been updated to include Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and histories.

With the Declaration Act and through the Declaration Act Action Plan, a BC NDP government would continue to strengthen partnerships with First Nations across ministries and service areas, including the Ministry of Education and Childcare and the Ministry of Post Secondary and Future Skills.

The BC NDP government implemented a key action within the Declaration Action Plan this past August where each local board of education will now establish and maintain an Indigenous Education Council (IEC). By making each school board more accountable to communities, they can take a distinctions-based approach, prioritize local protocols and language, honour cultural diversity within schools, and maintain consistent quality of service across the province. This way, the education system will be better equipped to ensure education on history is accurate, comprehensive, and includes content by and about local peoples.

Our government also made important changes to the School Act to support better education outcomes for First Nations and other Indigenous students attending provincial public schools, and more effective relationships between boards of education and First Nations. We know that Indigenous students can face systemic barriers that result in inequitable outcomes in school, and these changes are an important first step. There is much more work to do, including on improving graduation rates for Indigenous students, and we are working collaboratively with the First Nations Education Steering Committee and consulting with First Nations and Indigenous people throughout B.C.

In our Action Plan for You, David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to advance Indigenous education and training opportunities, including the preservation and revitalization of First Nations languages and cultural heritage. We will continue this important work to advance reconciliation in tangible and measurable ways for Indigenous students all across the province.

Since becoming leader, Rustad has alternately pledged to repeal the Declaration Act completely or water it down with just money-first agreements, threatening all the shared reconciliation work. David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to supporting advancing reconciliation so we can all move towards a more secure and prosperous future for generations to come.

How will you ensure schools are safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all students? 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?

Every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity deserves to feel safe and included in their school communities, and have equal opportunities to learn. It has been upsetting and distressing to see misinformation and disinformation used to attack our children and youth. It's very simple, SOGI is about teaching kids to respect people who are different. SOGI has been used in classrooms since 2016. BC Liberal MLAs like John Rustad supported it for years, and nothing about SOGI has changed since then. We believe strongly that school must be a place where students, staff and families can feel secure, welcomed and respected and our kids can be fully and completely **themselves**. Through our Safe Access to Schools Act – opposed by John Rustad's BC Conservatives – we acted to ensure schools remain inclusive, safe, and accessible places for learning, by

activating protected zones on and around school grounds to prevent any disruptive behaviour, such as aggressive protests against SOGI 123, from occurring within 20 metres of schools.

David Eby and the BC NDP are also taking action to provide hope and help for people experiencing mental health challenges. As committed in our platform, we are providing BC students the help they need by making sure every public school has a mental health counsellor - freeing up principals and teachers to do the work they're trained to do and making sure our kids can get help before small problems become big ones. And we are expanding mental health counselling care across BC through a new \$50 million Community Mental Health Resilience Fund.

David Eby and the BC NDP will continue to support education that promotes safe, caring and inclusive schools and to ensure young people learn to value diversity and to treat everyone with respect and dignity, so that every student feels like they belong.

Nanaimo Gabriola Island

- **Dale Parker, Conservative Party of BC**

Hello. The Party Headquarters will help with questionnaires. Please get in touch with them at: [Contact the Conservative Party of BC \(conservativebc.ca\)](http://conservativebc.ca)

Nanaimo-Lantzville

- **Lia Versaevel, BC Green Party**

Funding: There is no question that BC is grossly underfunding public education, and with a population that is growing exponentially, as in Nanaimo and Surrey, this must not continue to be the trajectory that we continue taking. Education needs a larger slice of the BC budget pie. no matter what model we employ. Teachers need to be paid well, as do all support staff within public schools. Students need a robust customized education plan tailored to their learning styles and capabilities. We cannot believe that a one size fits all approach will meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. Public education is a relatively recent social phenomenon, but critical to the advancement of democracy and social justice. We must have a well-rounded, curious, and well-informed population, who asks questions and is not content to be brain-washed.

Recruitment: There are many people living in BC, myself included, who tried to become certified as a Teacher in this Province, but were stymied by the red tape and bureaucracy. With a MA and teaching experience in Nevada, and acceptance into a PhD program, with transcripts from 7 BC Universities and Colleges, I could not get through the process, and needed to settle for TA jobs in various schools. A thorough review of the certification process must be undertaken, opening the door to incredible people with a diverse set of talents. There is untapped talent right here and right now in BC. Let's find a way to incorporate it for the benefit of all students.

Facilities: Schools stand empty for nearly half of every year. As single purpose buildings, particularly in urban environments, this is unacceptable. Classes must be offered on early and late schedules, and throughout the year. Our extended summer vacations were

designed around agrarian harvests and other antiquated notions. We must offer alternatives that improve the accessibility to school buildings and expand their hours of openness. In some countries there are Saturday and Sunday schools, as well, for specialized learning opportunities. Let's realize that it is 2024, not 1910.

Indigenous Students: The ramifications of Residential School survivors will last well into our collective future. Generational abuse and even genocide is in recent memory and must be the Truth part of the equation leading to Reconciliation. Mentors and language holders, elders and community representatives must be welcomed into the classrooms and schools, for the benefit of all students. Parents and grandparents must be welcomed into classrooms to see and hear that there is a new reality, not the one they suffered through. Reasons for learning must be promoted and include the ability to tell one's own story, speaking your truth, standing up for the rights of all students, social justice, UNDRIP and the 94 Calls to Action must be taught as essential curriculum.

Safe, welcoming schools: Everyone who is in a school deserves to feel and KNOW that they are in a safe space. This must be a reality that is learned in Pre-K and carried throughout the journey of education, beyond grade 12 and into post-secondary learning. K through 16 is a model that is in use in some jurisdictions (Nevada). Violence in any form must not be tolerated, and this includes emotional and social violence. All staff must exemplify this reality and receive ongoing training, from bus drivers through custodians and administration. Public schools are one of the best places to learn about inclusion and safety.

Richmond Centre

- **Henry Yao, BC New Democratic Party**

Thank you for contacting **Henry Yao**, the BC NDP candidate for Richmond Centre. This automated response is to confirm that your email has been received. For questions about the BC Provincial Election process, you can also contact Elections BC directly at www.elections.bc.ca or 1-800-661-8683. Henry Yao's Campaign Team. We will respond to your email as soon as possible. Thank you for your patience.

Sannich North and the Islands

- **Rob Botterell, BC Green Party**

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

The education system is the core of everything we do, and we need to start treating it as a top priority. As a parent, I saw my daughter grow up and navigate the school system here, and I want every student in our riding and across the province to have the same opportunities I wanted for her.

I recently attended a debate at Stelly's Secondary School in Saanichton, and I was thoroughly impressed by the students and their insightful questions. Their passion for their education and future serves as a powerful reminder of our responsibility to equip them with

the necessary tools to succeed. The issues we discuss during their election will greatly affect their futures—but perhaps none more so than education.

Education is the foundation of a healthy society, yet it has been consistently deprioritized by consecutive governments in British Columbia. When schools are inadequately funded and students spend their education years in portables, a clear message is sent to our youth: we are not investing in you. The impacts of teacher shortages, diminished funding for special education, and escalating operating costs—like the transportation issues happening here at home—are deeply felt by students and families alike, and yet no BC government has taken meaningful action to address these issues.

It's time for us to take a hard look at the budget, sharpen our pencils, and commit to putting education at the very top of our list. I want every student—just like my daughter—to have access to the resources they need to succeed. I'm proud to stand behind the BC Greens' commitment to modernizing operational funding and increasing grants for school districts so that every school has the support necessary to meet instructional and student needs. As your MLA, I look forward to working through these challenges and making education a priority for all.

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

There is no job more important than educating the next generation—and yet teachers and education workers across the province aren't given the support needed to meet the growing challenges in education, making it more difficult to attract and retain these vital roles. I deeply believe in the vital role educators play, which is why the BC Greens are committed to strengthening the education workforce by providing the necessary financial support, fair compensation, and streamlined processes for our dedicated educators.

We have specific commitments in place to make a real difference. For instance, we want to offer paid final practicums for teachers and early childhood educators (ECEs), giving them essential financial assistance during their training periods. We'll also simplify the certification process for teachers coming from other provinces or countries, making it easier to bring talented professionals to BC. Additionally, we're focused on developing bursaries for educators who are willing to serve in remote districts and increasing funding for rural and remote teacher education programs to help address workforce shortages. I understand the hard work that educational assistants (EAs) do, which is why we're committed to ensuring they receive fair compensation and increased hours so they can earn a living wage and enjoy job security. Plus, we'll pursue loan forgiveness programs for teachers, ECEs, and EAs as part of our broader commitment to support those in post-secondary education.

How will you ensure that B.C.'s students have timely access to safe, neighbourhood schools?

In our riding of Saanich North and the Islands, recent earthquakes highlight the need for safe and resilient infrastructure—particularly our schools. We have a responsibility to ensure our students learn in safe environments that support their success and give their families peace of mind. The BC Greens see the importance of modernizing our public school funding and infrastructure and have a plan to make it happen.

For current infrastructure, we need to assess our existing school buildings to ensure they meet high standards of safety, functionality, and climate resilience. This means implementing comprehensive reforms in facilities management.

Looking ahead, we need to simplify future school development by working across ministries and collaborating with the construction industry to create pre-approved universal building designs. This will help us ensure that new schools can accommodate projected student populations while optimizing construction processes. By reducing the complexities involved in school building—from requests for proposals to approvals—we can ensure schools are constructed quickly, efficiently and safely—with climate resiliency in mind.

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

Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of working alongside Indigenous communities, which has deepened my understanding of the unique challenges they face—and continue to face—rooted in the historical impacts of colonialism and discrimination, including the legacies of residential schools. Our classrooms need to be welcoming places that ensure Indigenous students receive what all students need to thrive: access to learning and resources that support and empower them to succeed. This means all schools in BC must be well-resourced – with teachers, support staff, mental health professionals, funding and technology to meet the needs of students. Schools have been underfunded and under-resourced for decades—particularly in rural and remote areas, where a higher percentage of Indigenous students are enrolled.

We are committed to equipping all students with the tools and resources they need to succeed, with a particular focus on populations that have been marginalized. Our schooling system should create conditions where all students feel included and empowered to thrive—and I am committed to making this vision a reality alongside the BC Greens and Indigenous communities as your MLA.

How will you ensure schools are safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all students? 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?

As I've mentioned, I strongly believe that education needs to be one of our biggest priorities, but it's not just about helping students succeed in their studies—it's about making sure they're in an environment where they feel safe, supported, and respected. Every student should be able to express themselves openly, share their ideas, and feel confident that they're in a space where they are valued. This kind of atmosphere is what allows students to grow into future leaders and changemakers who will make a difference in our communities and our world.

To help achieve this, the BC Greens are taking important steps to make our schools more inclusive and welcoming for all. We're committed to expanding initiatives like SOGI 123, which helps create inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ students by addressing issues of gender identity and sexual orientation. We're also launching disability and accessibility education campaigns in schools because every student deserves a learning space where they feel safe and included. Working with organizations like Disability Action of Canada ensures these efforts have a real, lasting impact.

I'm also passionate about increasing access to high school psychologists and boosting the number of guidance counsellors. By doing this, we can provide students with the mental health support they need and create school environments that are not just nurturing, but truly supportive of every aspect of a student's well-being.

Saanich South

Lana Popham, BC New Democratic Party

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

British Columbia is growing rapidly. We added 180,000 people to our province just last year, including many who are arriving with children and need access to schools. Every child deserves a strong start, and investing in K-12 education is how we build a brighter future for our kids and our communities.

Since forming government, we have increased funding for school boards by 55%, to support them to meet the increasing demands for additional services to support kids, parents and families. This is a strong contrast with previous governments which cut support for school boards when the families they serve needed it most.

David Eby and the BC NDP are taking action to give our kids the quality education they deserve. With the largest school food program in the province's history, we're ensuring that students are well-fed and ready to learn. And, for families who need extra help, we're taking action to cover the costs of school supplies and class trips, as well as sports and music programs. We are bringing more care into schools by launching School Outreach Teams for Children and Youth with Support Needs, providing rural and remote school districts access to specialist staff to support families. In addition, we have launched K-12 literacy screening and learning supports, helping all students, especially those with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, get the support they need to achieve their best.

We will continue to work in partnership with school boards, by providing additional capital funding for school expansion and for new school projects to meet the needs of growing populations. We will make sure schools have the funding and support needed to build and maintain our schools for generations to come.

Our commitments stand in stark contrast to those of our opponents. John Rustad proposes to address our growing population by increasing class sizes by at least 20% – which will lead to worse learning outcomes for kids, and greater challenges for teachers and support workers to maintain control in the classroom while providing support for children with additional needs. And the last time he was in office, his government froze school construction funding for eight straight years as the province grew rapidly, causing a massive deficit of school spaces. In short, the BC Conservatives' proposals to solve this problem are no solution at all.

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

Beginning in 2017, the BC NDP committed to hiring more teachers, especially in fast

growing and rural school districts. Our province has grown by more than 300,000 people in the last two years under Ottawa's immigration programs. That's why we are building new schools and hiring more teachers — over 5700 new teachers so far — to ensure our kids have supportive learning environments.

David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to hiring more teachers and educational assistants — because that allows for more one-on-one time and delivers better student results. We will keep making schools work better by getting more teachers into the classroom by creating a faster pathway to teacher certification for adults already working on-call in BC schools and attracting more teachers to high-need areas of the province through incentive programs.

How will you ensure that B.C.'s students have timely access to safe, neighbourhood schools?

We believe that no matter where people live in the province, their kids should have access to a high-quality public school. Gone are the days of the previous government discussing which schools to close. To meet the needs of growing communities, we are building and expanding schools in every corner of British Columbia. Many of our aging schools are overdue for replacement and we are taking action to upgrade or replace them via our Seismic Mitigation Program.

Since forming government, we have increased funding for school boards by 55%, ensuring that they are able to meet the increasing demands for additional services to support kids, parents and families. This is a strong contrast with previous governments which cut support for school boards when the families they serve needed it most.

We will continue to work in partnership with school boards, by providing additional capital funding for school expansions and for new school projects to meet the needs of growing populations. We will make sure schools have the funding and support needed to build and maintain our schools for generations to come.

Our commitments stand in stark contrast to those of our opponents. John Rustad proposes to address our growing population by increasing class sizes by at least 20% – which will lead to worse learning outcomes for kids, and greater challenges for teachers and support workers to maintain control in the classroom while providing support for children with additional needs. And the last time he was in office, his government froze school construction funding for eight straight years as the province grew rapidly, causing a massive deficit of school spaces. In short, the BC Conservatives' proposals to solve this problem are no solution at all.

In our Action Plan for You, we are committed to:

- Increasing support for students in the critical kindergarten to grade 3 years by staffing each classroom with an education assistant to support complex needs, and to support before- and after-school care programs.
- Ensuring every public school has a mental health counsellor - freeing up principals and teachers to do the work they're trained to do and making sure our kids can get help before small problems become big ones.
- Increasing support for kids with learning disabilities and their families by working with teachers to identify kids who are struggling early and support those kids with strategies to

learn, as well as expanding services and interventions for kids with dyslexia and other learning differences.

John Rustad's government closed 267 schools when he was in government, and fought with teachers all the way to the Supreme Court to try to increase class sizes. And he's on record calling for a 20% increase in class sizes. That is the opposite of what is needed in BC - we can't afford that.

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

BC is our home. We all want to build a good life here – and for too long, court rulings have created uncertainty across the province, and First Nations have been denied their rights. Real reconciliation means working together and finding a path forward that works for everyone. David Eby and the BC NDP are proud that in 2019 BC was the first jurisdiction in Canada to formally adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act with the unanimous support from all MLAs.

Reconciliation is a shared responsibility and partnerships between all levels of government are fundamental to improve life for everyone. In 2018, our NDP government signed a tripartite educational agreement between the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Province and the Government of Canada. Kindergarten through Grade 12 curriculum has been updated to include Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and histories.

With the Declaration Act and through the Declaration Act Action Plan, a BC NDP government would continue to strengthen partnerships with First Nations across ministries and service areas, including the Ministry of Education and Childcare and the Ministry of Post Secondary and Future Skills.

The BC NDP government implemented a key action within the Declaration Action Plan this past August where each local board of education will now establish and maintain an Indigenous Education Council (IEC). By making each school board more accountable to communities, they can take a distinctions-based approach, prioritize local protocols and language, honour cultural diversity within schools, and maintain consistent quality of service across the province. This way, the education system will be better equipped to ensure education on history is accurate, comprehensive, and includes content by and about local peoples.

Our government also made important changes to the School Act to support better education outcomes for First Nations and other Indigenous students attending provincial public schools, and more effective relationships between boards of education and First Nations. We know that Indigenous students can face systemic barriers that result in inequitable outcomes in school, and these changes are an important first step. There is much more work to do, including on improving graduation rates for Indigenous students, and we are working collaboratively with the First Nations Education Steering Committee and consulting with First Nations and Indigenous people throughout B.C.

In our Action Plan for You, David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to advance Indigenous education and training opportunities, including the preservation and revitalization of First Nations languages and cultural heritage. We will continue this

important work to advance reconciliation in tangible and measurable ways for Indigenous students all across the province.

Since becoming leader, Rustad has alternately pledged to repeal the Declaration Act completely or water it down with just money-first agreements, threatening all the shared reconciliation work. David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to supporting advancing reconciliation so we can all move towards a more secure and prosperous future for generations to come.

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?

Every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity deserves to feel safe and included in their school communities, and have equal opportunities to learn. It has been upsetting and distressing to see misinformation and disinformation used to attack our children and youth. It's very simple, SOGI is about teaching kids to respect people who are different. SOGI has been used in classrooms since 2016. BC Liberal MLAs like John Rustad supported it for years, and nothing about SOGI has changed since then.

We believe strongly that school must be a place where students, staff and families can feel secure, welcomed and respected and our kids can be fully and completely themselves. Through our Safe Access to Schools Act – opposed by John Rustad's BC Conservatives – we acted to ensure schools remain inclusive, safe, and accessible places for learning, by activating protected zones on and around school grounds to prevent any disruptive behaviour, such as aggressive protests against SOGI 123, from occurring within 20 metres of schools.

David Eby and the BC NDP are also taking action to provide hope and help for people experiencing mental health challenges. As committed in our platform, we are providing BC students the help they need by making sure every public school has a mental health counsellor - freeing up principals and teachers to do the work they're trained to do and making sure our kids can get help before small problems become big ones. And we are expanding mental health counselling care across BC through a new \$50 million Community Mental Health Resilience Fund.

David Eby and the BC NDP will continue to support education that promotes safe, caring and inclusive schools and to ensure young people learn to value diversity and to treat everyone with respect and dignity, so that every student feels like they belong.

Surrey- Guildford

- **Manjeet Sihota, BC Green Party**

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

There is a body of evidence that says the better quality of education a student gets and the longer they are in school the less chances of them getting into crime and getting arrested.

The BC Greens have already announced that we want a universal meal program, laptops for the students and counselors being accessible to the students. I believe all of these items will improve the quality of a student's education and make them want to go to post-secondary schools. Once we know the crime rate is going down, we should be able to shift some of the budget from crime to education. It won't happen overnight but we will get there eventually.

In the meantime, we will need to budget more money for education because we need to invest in our children and this investment will bring long term gains.

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

I think this question can have a lot of answers. Retention can depend on the friendships the teachers make at work, sense of belonging and the organizational social climate.

Where the teacher lives also plays a role. The BC Greens will make their living and commuting comfortable. The BC Greens will build 26,000 affordable rental housing per year. We will make public transit free, frequent and fast so teachers can get to their school quickly and stress free.

Also, the BC Greens will provide laptops to the students and a breakfast program which help the teachers to focus on what they want to do, which is teach.

When the word gets out that BC schools are great to work at other teachers will want to teach in BC also.

How will you ensure that B.C.'s students have timely access to safe, neighbourhood schools?

In regard to damage to schools sustaining damage from earthquakes we need to find out what schools could be dangerous during an earthquake, like schools built out of masonry. These schools then need to be upgraded to make them safe.

We also need to build more schools where they are required. If we are seeing a population growth in a particular city, like Surrey, we need to start to construct schools right away.

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

We don't need to reinvent the wheel because it is clearly mentioned in the Truth and Reconciliation document. Point 23 of the Truth and Reconciliation document says that we need to provide Indigenous students more scholarships if they are studying in Health Care. If students are having a hard time with their subjects, we need to make sure the support is there, like tutors.

How will you ensure schools are safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all students? 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?

In the education section of our platform, we announce that we will bring drug prevention education. Having students aware of the danger of drugs will keep students safe and keep drug dealers away from schools. We are also going to have psychologists and counselors available for students to talk to if students are feeling down.

SOGI education is a good program that prevents bullying and harassment when there is no misunderstanding about the program. A recent study by UBC Faculty of Education showed that SOGI 123 is effective in reducing bullying and harassment. SOGI helps recognize,

understand and build healthy relationships including self-respect, respect for others, commitment and tolerance in an age-appropriate way.

Vancouver-Renfrew

- **Tom Ikonou, Conservative Party of BC**

Thank you for reaching out to me. As I campaign to become your representative in Vancouver-Renfrew, my top priority is to be a voice for our community—a voice that reflects your concerns, ideas, and vision for the future. I believe that the best way to create meaningful change is by working together, and I want to hear from you. Your insights are invaluable as we strive to make Vancouver-Renfrew a better place for everyone. Whether it's ideas for improving funding, staffing, facilities, reconciliation or inclusion and safety, I'm eager to listen and learn. Your feedback will play a crucial role in shaping the policies I champion once elected. Please share your thoughts on these issues or any others that matter most to you and your family. Together, we can build a future that reflects the values and aspirations of everyone in Vancouver-Renfrew. I look forward to hearing from you and working side by side to make our community the best it can be.

Victoria-Swan Lake

- **Nina Krieger, BC New Democratic Party**

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

British Columbia is growing rapidly. We added 180,000 people to our province just last year, including many who are arriving with children and need access to schools. Every child deserves a strong start, and investing in K-12 education is how we build a brighter future for our kids and our communities.

Since forming government, we have increased funding for school boards by 55%, to support them to meet the increasing demands for additional services to support kids, parents and families. This is a strong contrast with previous governments which cut support for school boards when the families they serve needed it most.

David Eby and the BC NDP are taking action to give our kids the quality education they deserve. With the largest school food program in the province's history, we're ensuring that students are well-fed and ready to learn. And, for families who need extra help, we're taking action to cover the costs of school supplies and class trips, as well as sports and music programs. We are bringing more care into schools by launching School Outreach Teams for Children and Youth with Support Needs, providing rural and remote school districts access to specialist staff to support families. In addition, we have launched K-12 literacy screening and learning supports, helping all students, especially those with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, get the support they need to achieve their best.

We will continue to work in partnership with school boards, by providing additional capital funding for school expansion and for new school projects to meet the needs of growing populations. We will make sure schools have the funding and support needed to build and maintain our schools for generations to come.

Our commitments stand in stark contrast to those of our opponents. John Rustad proposes to address our growing population by increasing class sizes by at least 20% – which will lead to worse learning outcomes for kids, and greater challenges for teachers and support workers to maintain control in the classroom while providing support for children with additional needs. And the last time he was in office, his government froze school construction funding for eight straight years as the province grew rapidly, causing a massive deficit of school spaces. In short, the BC Conservatives’ proposals to solve this problem are no solution at all.

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

Beginning in 2017, the BC NDP committed to hiring more teachers, especially in fast growing and rural school districts. Our province has grown by more than 300,000 people in the last two years under Ottawa’s immigration programs. That’s why we are building new schools and hiring more teachers — over 5700 new teachers so far — to ensure our kids have supportive learning environments.

David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to hiring more teachers and educational assistants — because that allows for more one-on-one time and delivers better student results. We will keep making schools work better by getting more teachers into the classroom by creating a faster pathway to teacher certification for adults already working on-call in BC schools and attracting more teachers to high-need areas of the province through incentive programs.

In our Action Plan for You, we are committed to:

- Increasing support for students in the critical kindergarten to grade 3 years by staffing each classroom with an education assistant to support complex needs, and to support before- and after-school care programs.
- Ensuring every public school has a mental health counsellor - freeing up principals and teachers to do the work they’re trained to do and making sure our kids can get help before small problems become big ones.
- Increasing support for kids with learning disabilities and their families by working with teachers to identify kids who are struggling early and support those kids with strategies to learn, as well as expanding services and interventions for kids with dyslexia and other learning differences.

John Rustad’s government closed 267 schools when he was in government, and fought with teachers all the way to the Supreme Court to try to increase class sizes. And he’s on record calling for a 20% increase in class sizes. That is the opposite of what is needed in BC - we can’t afford that.

How will you ensure that B.C.’s students have timely access to safe, neighbourhood schools?

We believe that no matter where people live in the province, their kids should have access to a high-quality public school. Gone are the days of the previous government discussing which schools to close. To meet the needs of growing communities, we are building and expanding schools in every corner of British Columbia. Many of our aging schools are overdue for replacement and we are taking action to upgrade or replace them via our Seismic Mitigation Program.

Since forming government, we have increased funding for school boards by 55%, ensuring that they are able to meet the increasing demands for additional services to support kids, parents and families. This is a strong contrast with previous governments which cut support for school boards when the families they serve needed it most.

We will continue to work in partnership with school boards, by providing additional capital funding for school expansions and for new school projects to meet the needs of growing populations. We will make sure schools have the funding and support needed to build and maintain our schools for generations to come.

Our commitments stand in stark contrast to those of our opponents. John Rustad proposes to address our growing population by increasing class sizes by at least 20% – which will lead to worse learning outcomes for kids, and greater challenges for teachers and support workers to maintain control in the classroom while providing support for children with additional needs. And the last time he was in office, his government froze school construction funding for eight straight years as the province grew rapidly, causing a massive deficit of school spaces. In short, the BC Conservatives' proposals to solve this problem are no solution at all.

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

BC is our home. We all want to build a good life here – and for too long, court rulings have created uncertainty across the province, and First Nations have been denied their rights. Real reconciliation means working together and finding a path forward that works for everyone. David Eby and the BC NDP are proud that in 2019 BC was the first jurisdiction in Canada to formally adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act with the unanimous support from all MLAs.

Reconciliation is a shared responsibility and partnerships between all levels of government are fundamental to improve life for everyone. In 2018, our NDP government signed a tripartite educational agreement between the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Province and the Government of Canada. Kindergarten through Grade 12 curriculum has been updated to include Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and histories.

With the Declaration Act and through the Declaration Act Action Plan, a BC NDP government would continue to strengthen partnerships with First Nations across ministries and service areas, including the Ministry of Education and Childcare and the Ministry of Post Secondary and Future Skills.

The BC NDP government implemented a key action within the Declaration Action Plan this past August where each local board of education will now establish and maintain an Indigenous Education Council (IEC). By making each school board more accountable to communities, they can take a distinctions-based approach, prioritize local protocols and language, honour cultural diversity within schools, and maintain consistent quality of service across the province. This way, the education system will be better equipped to ensure education on history is accurate, comprehensive, and includes content by and about local peoples.

Our government also made important changes to the School Act to support better education outcomes for First Nations and other Indigenous students attending provincial public schools, and more effective relationships between boards of education and First Nations. We know that Indigenous students can face systemic barriers that result in inequitable outcomes in school, and these changes are an important first step. There is much more work to do, including on improving graduation rates for Indigenous students, and we are working collaboratively with the First Nations Education Steering Committee and consulting with First Nations and Indigenous people throughout B.C.

In our Action Plan for You, David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to advance Indigenous education and training opportunities, including the preservation and revitalization of First Nations languages and cultural heritage. We will continue this important work to advance reconciliation in tangible and measurable ways for Indigenous students all across the province.

Since becoming leader, Rustad has alternately pledged to repeal the Declaration Act completely or water it down with just money-first agreements, threatening all the shared reconciliation work. David Eby and the BC NDP are committed to supporting advancing reconciliation so we can all move towards a more secure and prosperous future for generations to come.

How will you ensure schools are safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all students? 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?

Every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity deserves to feel safe and included in their school communities, and have equal opportunities to learn. It has been upsetting and distressing to see misinformation and disinformation used to attack our children and youth. It's very simple, SOGI is about teaching kids to respect people who are different. SOGI has been used in classrooms since 2016. BC Liberal MLAs like John Rustad supported it for years, and nothing about SOGI has changed since then.